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MAYFAIR TO MARITZBURG.

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MAYFAIR TO MARITZBURG

Reminiscences of Eighty Years

BY
GUSTAVE HALLÉ

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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FIRST EDITION . . . 1933

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“ Si quid novisti rectius istis
Candide imperti : si non his utere mecum ! ”

HORACE.

“ The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something and tell what it saw in a plain way.”—RUSKIN.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

MAYFAIR, the hub of the London social movement in the second half of the past century, and Maritzburg, the pivot of Natal activities up to the present—my composite career of eighty-two years has reached from one to the other. I have been, as it were, an acolyte in the British Holy of Holies of high art; a Government engineer to a Boer Republic; editor, for thirty years, of independent daily and weekly South African papers; chairman of political, musical, and Native affairs societies; of strike-breaking Citizens' Leagues, and Lynchers' Defence Committees. I have floated gold mining companies and saved a native territory from annexation to the Transvaal; advised a Governor-General how to meet a Labour upheaval and a condemned murderer how to play his nap hand; acted as Intelligence Officer in the second Boer War and war fund raiser during the Great War.

Coming out, through ill-health, at the age of 30, imbued with the cultural best of England, I have tried to do my bit industrially, culturally and politically in the cause of racial moderation and justice to the Native. A romantic courtship during the Raid led to thirty-four years of happy married life, at the tragic end of which I retired to live, on my small competence, with my married son, a successful electrical engineer. Here, at the age of 82, sur-

rounded by the evidence of the flowering and ripening of yet another generation of effort, the *joie de vivre* of my delightful little grandsons brings back to me, as I work at these reminiscences of a long life, Robert Browning's great lines: "God renews his ancient rapture of creation in each spring." Does not spring seem to be reopening, not only in South Africa, but in the whole civilised world?

I must cordially thank Sir John Murray for many courtesies in regard to this work, and Mrs. Lang for her valuable assistance in preparing this book for publication, and reading the proofs, thus avoiding, as far as possible, the disadvantages in time and distance consequent on my absence in South Africa.

GUSTAVE HALLÉ.

MESSELS NEK,
May 1933.

FOREWORD

GUSTAVE HALLÉ, the writer of these Reminiscences, has had an interesting career. Born in 1851, a son of Sir Charles Hallé, the well-known musician, he was brought up among the leading artists and writers of the day ; his father, brother (C. E. Hallé, the artist) and stepmother (formerly Madame Norman Neruda) received many marks of Royal favour. In early life he wrote poetry which was commended by Robert Browning, but there was no money in it and he took up engineering. In the 'seventies he helped in the construction of the Albert Docks, the exposure told upon his health ; he gave up the work, and in 1880 went out to South Africa. Between 1880 and 1887, as Government engineer and architect to the Orange Free State, he constructed three steel bridges, two stone ones and four hundred official buildings. From 1887 to 1893 he developed and floated gold ventures and concessions in the eastern Transvaal and Swaziland.

From the first he was greatly interested in politics and an ardent Imperialist ; he represented the white concessionaires of Swaziland before the Sir Francis de Winton Commission, and was largely instrumental in inducing the British Government to refuse to hand that country over to the Transvaal. In 1893, returning to Johannesburg, he drifted into political journalism,

was for some years leader-writer on the *Star*, and later contributed the political articles to the *Critic*, a journal which, by its fearless advocacy of the Uitlander cause and scathing attacks on governmental and capitalist abuses, acquired great influence. Though he was firmly in favour of the Uitlander agitation, he protested against the interference of Cecil Rhodes, but when the Jameson Raid ended in fiasco he helped to keep the people of the Rand together. At the outbreak of the Boer War he was arrested and sent to Lourenço Marques, and as he was over fighting age he joined the Imperial Intelligence Department. After the war he accepted the editorship of the *Natal Advertiser* and fought hard for Federation at the time of the Convention. Always to the front in every progressive movement, he was president of the Native Affairs Reform Association, one of the founders of the Durban Technical College and the Natal Eisteddfodau, first president of the Natal Journalists' Society, and founder of the Citizens' League. From his fifty years' experience he undoubtedly knows more of the inner history of the Dominion than any man living, and his many stories throw sometimes a lurid, sometimes a humorous, light on many events.

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CHAPTER I

GLIMPSES AT ROYALTY

WHEN I first conceived the idea of this book the following reminiscences struck me as of special interest, and therefore suitable as first facets in what I might call my kaleidoscope. The incidents taught me something of the Royal breed of the human race—the breed of which old King Leopold of Belgium once said that “their business in life was that of being kings”—and the degree to which Royalty shares the characteristics of our common humanity.

An occasion on which a fellow pianist played an important, if necessarily undivulged, part in the dynastic affairs of Great Britain may now be made public, as the actors major and minor in the episode have long since passed away.

It is a matter of common knowledge that on the demise of the Prince Consort in 1861, at the comparatively early age of forty-two, Queen Victoria was absolutely prostrated with grief, but it was concealed from the public that her abandonment to sorrow was so complete she had fallen into a state of coma, which caused the greatest alarm to the Royal Family and the physicians in attendance. When efforts to rouse the august lady proved vain, an urgent summons was despatched to my father, then Mr. Hallé, and what transpired on his arrival at Windsor Castle is herewith

given, as far as possible in his own words. He was taken to a library, and joined presently by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward), two or three special physicians, and an intimate official of the household. It was explained to him that the Queen was in a state of profound insensibility, or coma, from which it had proved impossible to rouse her, and that the doctors had decided, as a last resource, to try the effect of music, and had sent for him, as a musician who had always been in favour with both the Queen and the Prince Consort. He was to be taken quietly into her darkened boudoir, where she was seated by the fire, and to place himself at the piano some distance off and begin to play, very softly, anything that suggested itself to him. One of the physicians would stand behind her chair, and signal to him to play a little louder, or more quietly, or to stop, as might seem needful.

They went into the boudoir on tip-toe, and my father afterwards said that the huddled figure of the great Queen by the fire, in the dim light, was the most tragically pathetic and moving sight that could be conceived. He found his way silently to the piano, and began to play almost inaudibly the gentlest piece of music he could think of, a *morceau* by Beethoven. After a minute or so, the physician signed to him to play a little louder; he did, but still softly, and after being signalled to once or twice to play with less or greater *empressement*, he suddenly remembered one of the Prince Consort's favourite pieces, a Schubert number, which he had frequently played before the Royal pair. This he was allowed to proceed with rather more distinctly, until, at last, he noticed a slight

movement on the part of the silent figure by the fire. The physician motioned to him excitedly to emphasise his playing, and he burst at last into the full, if still subdued, strain of the melody. The effect was dramatic in the extreme. The Queen suddenly raised herself from her chair to her full height, her arms above her head, and uttering a heart-rending cry of anguish, fell face downwards, in a perfect passion of sobs and tears. The Prince and the physicians rushed to raise her, and my father was hurried out of the room by an agitated official. He was thrust again into the library, and paced about for what seemed an interminable period, wondering in the deepest anxiety whether the experiment had proved successful or had ended in a tragedy. There were muffled sounds as of someone being borne away, and excited whisperings.

At last the door opened hurriedly and the Prince of Wales hastened in, followed by two physicians, took him by both hands, and told him with tears in his eyes that, under Providence, he had saved the Queen's life, or her reason. He assured him of the Royal Family's undying gratitude, and impressed on him the absolute necessity of complete silence as to the scene in which he had taken part.

As is known well enough, Royal favour was shown my father on many a subsequent occasion, and the secrecy enjoined has, so far as is known, been preserved till now.

My father was once summoned to Windsor Castle, as frequently happened, to play with, or for, certain of the Royalties in residence, and, this duty accomplished, was taken by Queen Victoria's private secretary

to the latter's rooms, for a smoke, chat and tea before catching his train back to London. While indulging in this harmless recreation, a message came that Her Majesty required her secretary's services. As he left the room he told my father that there were some documents on the table that might amuse him—"not things to talk about, though!" he added, as he went out. My father availed himself of this qualified permission, and was poring over one of these documents when the private secretary returned. "I say!" he exclaimed, looking up, "this is rather strong language to a Queen, even from Cabinet Ministers, isn't it? 'Must!'" The paper was a communication from the Cabinet regarding the Queen's emphatic and repeated objection to giving the Order of the Garter to the Shah of Persia, then on his first visit to England. She had, as intimated, given it to the Sultan of Turkey, very reluctantly, on the score that it cheapened the distinction, but to give it to the Shah as well would be going too far!

The document my father referred to recapitulated all this as an opinion from Her Majesty, to which the Cabinet had given full and respectful consideration, but they had to say now, and finally, that, as they had pointed out before, the Shah was a monarch who enjoyed a standing in Asia equal to that of the Sultan, and that as Great Britain was also an Asiatic Power, and must study its Asiatic subjects, the Cabinet had to inform Her Majesty that the Garter "must" be given to the Shah. The phraseology of the paper may have been different, but the concluding sentences contained this word "must."

“ Oh,” said the private secretary, lightly, “ this is the usual formula, and merely means that the discussion is closed. The Queen has often very determined views. But,” he added dryly, “ so has the Cabinet ! These differences of opinion are often expressed very strongly on both sides, but when the Cabinet has quite made up its mind not to make further concessions, it simply announces, politely, that the thing ‘ must ’ be done, and the Queen lets the matter drop ; or go through. The procedure is quite common knowledge in Government and Court circles.”

The incident affords a curious commentary on Seneca’s cryptic saying that “ every Monarch is subject to a mightier one.”

To turn to lighter matter, the following is an account of how a solemn historic occasion was turned into an amusing comedy under the very noses of Their Royal Highnesses, Edward and Alexandra, then Prince and Princess of Wales.

Sir John Pender, Chairman of the Eastern Telegraph Company, had invited a large and distinguished company to the magnificent old house in Arlington Street which he and his family were occupying, to meet T.R.H. the Prince and Princess, and listen to the first exchange of messages between the former and His Excellency the Viceroy of India, over the cable connection of London with Calcutta just completed.

An instrument had been placed in the centre of a large red carpet in the great drawing-room, and after the Royalties, their suites, and we of the general guests had been duly received by Sir John and Lady Pender, and some choice music provided, the whole company

adjourned thither. The drawing-room, with its brilliant decoration and blaze of lights, presented an impressive spectacle as the host and hostess with the Royalties stationed themselves near the instrument, and the rest of us gathered round.

The nervous, but capable-looking, operator having answered Sir John's enquiry "whether everything was in order?" in the affirmative, the Prince of Wales read out the usual type of stately complimentary message, declaring "H.R.H.'s gratification at having been asked to transmit to H.E. Great Britain's first communication over the new line of connection between the centre of the Empire and its great dependency, India," and so forth, concluding with the assurance that this important new development would further the progress of both countries and their several people, etc., etc.

This duly despatched, an announcement was made by Sir John that a quarter of an hour would have to be allowed for the receipt of a reply from Calcutta, and all adjourned for more music, refreshments and general conversation. After a due interval the assemblage took their places as before in the drawing-room, and a thrill of interest evidently stirred all present, including the Royalties, when a tinkle from the instrument stilled the buzz of conversation.

When the machine stopped, after a surprisingly short activity, the operator gasped, reddened and looked deprecatingly at Sir John. "Well?" asked the latter, impatiently, "has the reply come through?" "A message has, sir," rejoined the young man falteringly. "Well, let us have it," exclaimed the

Prince encouragingly, patting him on the shoulder. "The reply reads," whispered the embarrassed operator quite audibly, "'Have sent to wake the old buster up!'" An instrument had, it seemed on enquiry later, been set up in the study of the Viceregal residence, Calcutta, and an operator left in charge to receive the expected message when it came through, naturally in the small hours of the morning.

When the unexpected announcement fell on the ears of this notable assembly in Arlington Street, that H.E. the Viceroy was being fetched out of bed in Calcutta, a gasp of surprise was followed by a shout of laughter, led by the Prince. H.R.H. turned to Sir John and said, genially as ever, "Well, Sir John, we had better go and wait till 'the old buster' is awake." And another adjournment was made for further refreshment and chat, this time of a particularly lively nature.

On our second assembling in the saloon, when the real reply came through, it was with difficulty that the general merriment could be kept down sufficiently to allow of the duly solemn reception of its sonorous and dignified expression of His Excellency's pride and pleasure in being privileged to reply, on behalf of the Indian people, to His Royal Highness's gracious message on this auspicious occasion; and so forth and so forth. The gilt had undoubtedly been washed off the ginger-bread!

The two following stories provide an illuminative insight into the princely courtesy, kind-heartedness and grasp of human values that marked both the Prince and Princess of Wales of the later nineteenth century, afterwards King and Queen, Edward and Alexandra.

Lady Airlie had given a huge party at Chesham House, and the great reception hall, a brilliantly lighted expanse of white walls, divided by a double row of pilasters supporting the lofty ceiling, was rendered particularly charming by the vision afforded at the end of a smaller drawing-room in rose colour, led up to through folding doors by a slight flight of two or three broad steps. The hall was thronged by the usual crowd of British and foreign notabilities, all in gala attire. The murmur of many voices and quiet laughter suddenly died, and the Prince and Princess, with their host and hostess, and lady and equerry-in-waiting, were seen passing down the strip of red cloth laid between the two rows of pilasters, bowing and smiling to the distinguished people on either side.

The Prince and Princess had between them, moreover, a venerable, long-haired and long-bearded figure, at once familiar and, under such circumstances, unfamiliar, to all present. Kinglake, the historian of the Crimean War, happened to be near where I stood, and exclaimed excitedly, "Tennyson, by Jove! and the first time he has appeared in society for seventeen years!"

Well! The stately procession moved to the upper end of the hall, where chairs of ceremony had been placed, and here the Prince made the old poet sit in the seat provided for himself next to the Princess, and, as the great assemblage passed in procession before the Royal pair, he motioned, smilingly, to one and all to make obeisance to the dignified and grave old poet, as well as to the Princess and himself. The scene reminded one of the historic occasion on which the

Emperor, Charles V, picked up a paint-brush which the famous Velasquez had dropped and remarked to the protesting grandees, "I can make a hundred nobles out of as many peasants, but only God can make a genius!"

On the occasion I am about to relate, it was Lord Leighton who acted the part of the *parfait gentilhomme*, though it was Edward and Alexandra who presented the opportunity. Leighton was giving a great "house-warming" to celebrate the completion of his magnificent new studio, and the scene, with its splendid background and illustrious company, which included the Prince and Princess of Wales, quite held its own with the two scenes already recorded.

When the Royal cortège had reached the seats of honour at the top of the great studio, capable of holding at least one thousand persons, and filled with quite that number of distinguished people, Lord Leighton, with characteristic nervousness, asked Their Royal Highnesses to allow him to present his father and mother. The father was originally a chemist in quite a small way in the North of England, and Leighton explained that the old people had followed his career with such joy, pride and thankfulness that it would be unutterably delightful to him if the Prince and Princess would allow them to share with him in this crowning moment of his career, "the gracious seal put to his efforts by the presence of T.R.H. that evening," or words to that effect.

The Prince replied heartily, "Why, of course!" took them both by the hand when Leighton brought them up, presented them to the Princess, seated them

on each side of her, remained standing with Leighton by the side of the father, and explained their presence to those present as they filed by, with all his usual geniality. The old people, set perfectly at their ease by the noted kindliness of the Royal pair, behaved with charming, tranquil dignity, the mother feeling encouraged to whisper to the Princess that she felt inclined to cry, her heart was so full of pride and gratitude for her dear son—a scene which did equal honour to the chief participants in it.

The following amusing incident involving a king and a small dog occurred on a voyage of my father's and Lady Hallé's, and though it does not seem to have been mentioned in either of their Memoirs, it may be taken as authentic.

My father and Lady Hallé, when taking their annual holiday one year, went to Stockholm to visit her friends and her first husband's relations, and proposed to proceed by boat to Copenhagen, and thence through Denmark, and so on to Vienna.

When boarding the steamer at Stockholm Lady Hallé heard a disturbance behind her, and turning found her maid, to whom she had entrusted her tiny pet dog, having an altercation with one of the boat's officers. The maid exclaimed indignantly that "they wouldn't let her take the dog on board," and on the irate violinist snatching the small beast up and demanding "Why not?" it was patiently explained to her that owing to a recent outbreak of hydrophobia in Denmark the importation of all dogs had been prohibited for the next six months. "My dog knows nothing of hydrophobia, and I must and will take it

with me!" vociferated Lady Hallé. The boat's captain, who had strolled up, shrugged his shoulders: "Certainly you can take it to Copenhagen, but they will only throw it into the dock when you get there."

"Will they!" exclaimed the lady, with an imitation of a snort. "Bring me a telegraph form!" A friendly steward obliged, and Lady Hallé scribbled a brief message, and gave it to one of her male friends who had come to see her off, to despatch at once. He hurried away and the officials offered no further resistance to her taking her pet, triumphantly, down to her cabin. To my father's puzzled enquiries as to what she was up to, she only replied in Asquith's famous words: "Wait and see!"

Arrived at Copenhagen, all on board, now amused and interested as to what the outcome of the affair might be, were surprised to notice a half-company of Danish soldiers drawn up in front of the Customs House, behind a group of officers. The boat fastened up to the quay, and as soon as the gangway was let down, an officer, from his uniform palpably a colonel, and his adjutant, came on board, and the latter, who bore something on a cushion, strode up to the Captain and asked if "Lady Hallé were on board?" The Captain returned the salute and pointed to my father and stepmother, standing by (the latter with the wee dog in her arms), and the gaping passengers crowding behind. A word between the two officers, and the Colonel, stepping up, saluted, and stated that he had had the honour of receiving telegraphic orders from H.M. King Christian to receive Lady Hallé "with every distinction"—here he waved a hand to the

Guard of Honour on the quay—"and to present her with a further message direct from the King."

He motioned to his adjutant, who advanced, saluted and presented to her Ladyship the telegram resting on the cushion. "There!" she exclaimed, after opening the envelope, reading the message and handing it to my father, "I told you they could not prevent me taking my little pet with me!" My father, rather stupefied, read the following words: "Christian, to Lady Hallé, Copenhagen Docks. You have my permission to take any animal you like through my kingdom." As my stepmother was pouring out incoherent explanations to the utterly bewildered colonel, my father quietly handed him the telegram, and told him in a few words what all the fuss was about, adding that he had had no idea his wife was wiring to His Majesty.

The astonished officer flushed to the eyes and seemed for a moment inclined to make a scene: he had, after all, had to "call the guard out" to receive a puppy dog! However, his sense of humour prevailed, he gave a shout of laughter, took the dog in his arms, and escorted Lady Hallé and my father with much ceremony down the gangway and across to the waiting military, where he presented his officers to them, while the men presented arms. He then took them to a dainty lunch in the mess-room, where he told the whole story to the other officers—an old major looking more inclined to frown than to smile—and a merry function followed, during which the hero of the episode was petted and fed by those round the table as it had never been before.

To the daring of *prime donne*, vocal and instrumental, there is verily no end! Did not Patti once bid a Czar of All the Russias make his field-marshal sing to him when he told her, amazed, that the fee she wanted for a week in opera at St. Petersburg was more than the pay of any of them for a year?

An incident, tending to show that the pomp and ceremony of a high position does not always suppress a natural lightness of heart, occurred one day at Marlborough House after my father had attended there to play duets with Alexandra, Princess of Wales. The music ended, my father proceeded to retire backward, in the ungainly crab-fashion enjoined by etiquette, trusting that he would strike the open door rather than some sharp-edged piece of furniture. The Princess, in seeming kindness of heart, undertook his guidance.

"A little that way, Sir Charles! Now—a little that!" The gentle advice trilled out, accompanied by appropriate gestures, and my father went his backward way rejoicing—to be brought up suddenly by his spine in contact with the edge of the open door. As he involuntarily straightened himself up, a little bewildered, there stood the charming Princess, with her handkerchief to her lips, concealing evidently the Royal equivalent to a giggle.

Over went all consideration for dignified Court procedure, and my father, as he whisked through the door, face forward, could not, for the life of him, refrain from mildly shaking a fist at his Royal tormentress before he turned his back.

The following tale is designed to show that, while a great many people may find it difficult to get into

Windsor Castle, it may well happen that some of those who have got in find it still harder to get out! My brother, C. E. Hallé, was once commissioned by Queen Victoria to paint the portrait of one of her maids of honour. The sittings took place in his London studio, and when the portrait was completed, he wrote to Her Majesty's private secretary to ask when he was to take it to Windsor, where the Queen was in residence, for her inspection. A date being fixed, he took the picture down by train, and found a carriage waiting for him at Windsor station.

Arrived at the castle, his difficulties began. There was no carpenter in the huge building, nor a chisel, nor a hammer. All three had to be requisitioned from the village before the wooden case containing the work of art could be opened in a back hall, and the work conveyed, under the direction of the private secretary and my brother, to an upper chamber, where an easel had been placed to receive it. Having arranged the picture in a proper light, my brother intimated that it was ready for the Queen's inspection. To his surprise the private secretary took him away to his private room, as Her Majesty wished to make her inspection with no one but the private secretary present. My brother suggested it would be an advantage if he could hear the Queen's criticisms at first hand, but was answered that might well be, only the other way was the Queen's fixed custom, and there was nothing for it but to retire to the private secretary's quarters. Looking back as he left the room my brother had a fleeting impression of a Royal figure in an opposite doorway.

When reconducted to the picture, and informed by the private secretary of the Queen's opinions and wishes, he found that the few minor alterations suggested by Her Majesty showed true artistic taste and understanding of a fine order.

This ordeal successfully over, the picture was consigned to the imported carpenter and the castle servants to be repacked and sent back to London, and my brother was taken by the private secretary to have a solitary lunch, his guide, philosopher and friend having other duties to attend to.

This lunch proved a greater ordeal still. It was certainly simple enough! Some slices of excellent cold beef, mashed potatoes and a lettuce salad, with cheese and celery to follow, washed down by half a pint of sherry. The dining-room was, however, large, lofty and heavily furnished. The table, at the head of which my brother sat, could easily have accommodated forty guests. A 6-foot domestic in scarlet stood at each side of the solitary feeder, while a butler, with the dignified suavity of an archbishop, attended to his needs. Repressing a wild desire to take this last apparition round the waist, and perform a fandango round the table, my brother cut the meal as short as he could without choking, and was then gravely conducted back to the private secretary's rooms by the same dignitary, who amiably supplied cigars, drink and soda, and informed him that he would be conveyed to the station to catch the next train in an hour or so's time.

There being no indication that the private secretary was not still busied, my brother thought he would

prefer a stroll through the picturesque old town, took his hat and stick and stepped into the passage to enquire his way to a front or side door. Naturally, he promptly lost himself, and was hauled up in one of the countless passages by a man-servant, who bowed and said, politely enough, "If you will give me the number of your room, sir, I will take you there." My brother replied, of course, that he had no room; that he had finished his business, and wished to leave the castle. The man looked at him dubiously, and asked him to remain exactly where he was, while he fetched someone unspecified. This my brother did and the man presently returned in a hurry, with one who was evidently higher in authority. This personage repeated the formula: "If you will tell me the number of your room, sir, I will have you conducted to it." My brother spoke his piece again: he had no room; he was there on business, which was finished, and all he wanted was to get out! He and his card were again examined doubtfully, and he was once more asked to stay where he was, this time with the first man in attendance, while a third person was fetched. This proved to be a minor official, who went through the same routine, only to elicit the same monotonous statement in reply. This third individual also went off, and, as my brother was wondering whether the whole household was going to assemble, with the same parrot-like cry, Brown himself, the captain of the household, appeared on the scene, a splendid figure in a gorgeous Royal tartan Highland dress, courtesy and command personified. A few words set matters right. Brown laughed, a fine, genial laugh,

dismissed the others, and said he would himself conduct Mr. Hallé to the nearest way out to the town. On the way, he explained that two suspicious individuals had been found inside only a week or so before, and he had had to issue orders that any servant who met anyone in a passage and did not recognise him, or her, as a member of the household, was to ask the number of his or her room, and take the party there, or detain him, or her, for identification.

Evidently a necessary precaution, if puzzling to the uninitiated !

CHAPTER II

EARLY EXPERIENCES

MY very earliest recollection is of a scene at the Great Manchester Exhibition of 1857, in which I managed, at the age of six and a half, to escape from my nurse, and seeing my father in the distance, conducting a band of musicians, promptly ran, howling, down the centre gangway of the great hall through a large assembly until I was collared by a policeman, and carried by a side passage to the artistes' room. I remember the vastness of the silent audience, and the volume of sound from the platform, and a vague impression of the appreciation of these northern people for such a function, even in those early days.

A further indelible memory of my childhood is of the sights and sounds of the railway stations in London and Manchester, on our half-yearly migrations, in spring and autumn, from the one town to the other, to suit my father's activities. As our family grew to the number of nine, or, with our parents, eleven, and, servants included, fifteen, these events were no light matters, and I was always fascinated by the spectacle of a troop of porters hauling our luggage on to the tops of the old stage-coach type of railway carriage, and fastening it to the side railings, under tarpaulins, by endless coils of rope. Luggage vans were slow in making their appearance.

A more lurid recollection is of myself as a small boy

of thirteen, cowering under the bed-clothes, on a wild, wintry night in the early 'sixties, listening to the distant tramp of many heavy feet on the frosty roads, and the sound of hoarse voices singing the song of the unemployed operatives during the cotton famine caused by the American War of the North and South :

“ We’ve got no work to do-oo-oo-oo-oo,
We’ve got no work to do-oo-oo-oo-oo !
We’re all the way from Ma-a-nchester,
And we’ve got no work to do ! ”

I can still hear the grim, savage roar of this “ oo-oo-oo-oo ” like the howling of famished wolves. I knew what it was all about ! Were not my mother’s family and friends undergoing dreadful things in New Orleans, many of them fighting farther north, and had I not myself been taken by my mother and sisters to one of the soup kitchens in the town they were helping to run ? The faces of the starving women and children awed me ! And had we not heard of one rich speculator who had filled a great warehouse with flour to the roof, holding it for super-famine prices, and paying men 10s. a week to turn it over with wooden shovels to keep it sweet ; till one of them blabbed, and a maddened crowd sacked and destroyed the place, and went out to the owner’s suburban mansion and treated it likewise ?

One year in the 'sixties or 'seventies my father had as usual taken Egypt House, Isle of Wight, just past West Cowes, and on the shore of the Solent, for the midsummer holidays, and we were all enjoying a game of croquet with some visitors on the lawn between the old house and the sea-wall, when our

attention was drawn to an extraordinary old ship making its slow way to Southampton Water with a "clank, clank" from the beam high on deck, which worked its antiquated upright pistons and cylinders. Some wit present suggested that Noah had transhipped from the Ark. However, the apparition lumbered on round Calshot Castle, and we waited next day's news as to when it had emerged from Davy Jones's locker. News came surprisingly enough! Next afternoon, while again playing croquet, we were amazed to see a tall and stately soldier, garbed in a magnificent white Hussar uniform, come round the front corner of the house, from the carriage drive, and stop to watch the game. He was joined by a second in a superb red cavalry get-up, then by a third, fourth, fifth, and so on, in different-coloured uniforms, but all evidently foreign cavalry, and without exception men of splendid physique, well-mannered, and bearing themselves with perfect ease.

"They are Austrian Guardsmen!" exclaimed my father, "but how on earth do they come to be here?" However, he, my brother and I, and an officer or two with us that afternoon, went up to them, and as they drew themselves up and saluted, my father addressed one, evidently a non-commissioned officer, and said we were all most pleased to see them, but where had they come from, and who were they? The non-commissioned officer replied courteously, that they had come from Mexico! They had been part of the late Emperor Maximilian's Bodyguard, selected from the Austrian *garde-du-corps*, and after the Emperor's execution they had been

deported in the only vessel available—the old hulk we had seen the day before. A terrible voyage! and the terrible thing had broken down and was being repaired. They had been given leave to stretch their legs, and on walking down the road from Cowes had seen the gates open of what they thought a public park, but on seeing those beautiful ladies they had grown doubtful. My father, of course, pooh-poohed their apologies, and said they must stay for refreshments. We boys helped the servants to bring out tables and chairs, and the men presently sat down to an excellent repast of cold beef, ham, tongue, cheese, jam, fruit, beer, wine, cigars and cigarettes, during which they told us weird stories of their Mexican experiences. We were all charmed by their natural politeness.

Next day brought an amusing sequel. The beggars had evidently told gorgeous stories of how they had been entertained at “Egypt,” the charm of the quaint old château, and the beauty of the ladies on the lawn—and there were certainly some lovely faces there—and the officers naturally had to come up and see for themselves! Here they were! Some ten of them, arrayed as Solomon in all his glory, present on the thin excuse of feeling bound to come and apologise for their men’s trespassing the day before. However, after saluting right and left, and introducing themselves and each other, by names belonging to the oldest Austro-Hungarian titled nobility, they consented, readily enough, to be introduced to those present, a typical Cowes assemblage, in which lovely girls and women were not lacking—and to have tea, cigars and cigarettes on the lawn.

But we were to have another set of visitors entirely at "Egypt" shortly afterwards, on a serio-comic occasion.

One of my youngest sisters, later an Abbess of the Little Sisters of the Poor, had a birthday early in September, and my father, who had had to run up to London on business, came back with a large assortment of fireworks, as well as presents, for the children's party to be given in her honour. It was a clear dark night, and my brothers and myself and our young friends made a glorious job of the set-pieces, rockets, etc., letting them off on the lawn and at the top of the old tower, and winding up at nearly 11 p.m. with a blinding set of various-coloured Bengal lights, in a row on the garden wall, the top of which was 2 feet 6 inches above the lawn and 6 feet above the beach, the water just washing its foot at high tide. Our guests had supper and left, and we turned in, well content with the day's success.

At about 2 a.m. I was roused by unusual sounds : a murmur of voices, a tramp of heavy feet up the drive in front from the beach gate, a clash of side-arms, and a thunderous rat-tat-tat on the front door. I got out of bed, put on boots and breeches, and went into the passage with a candle, to find my father and brothers coming from their rooms, equally sleepy and puzzled. As the uproar at the front door was growing more insistent, we went down and opened it, to find a squad of coast-guards, heavily attired, and bearing lanterns, headed by a lieutenant. The latter exclaimed impatiently, "Well, where's the wreck?" "The wreck?" replied my bewildered father. "We know

nothing of a wreck!” “Nonsense!” returned the now irate officer. “How about the rockets on your tower and lawn, and the huge flares? You don’t think we dreamt it all?” After a moment’s stupefaction, one of my younger brothers gave a yell of delight, and none of us could help showing we thought the whole thing a colossal joke. “Why!” shouted the boy, “it was my little sister’s birthday, and we were having fireworks!” “That is so,” said my father more staidly. “We had no idea it would cause any trouble!”

But the matter had its ugly side. The men outside were evidently in a rage. Rough voices were heard. “A nice thing to lug poor men out of bed at midnight for a twenty-mile row!” “A kid’s fireworks, Bill!” “Deserve to have their blinkin’ house pulled down!” The lieutenant told them angrily to hold their row, and turning to my father said grimly enough, “This is not the laughing matter you and your sons seem to think it. We have had to row from the coast-guard station ten miles farther up the coast the other side of the Solent, and have spent half an hour searching this wretched beach!” And when my father tried to apologise in earnest, the officer rapped out, “You ought to know, sir, that there is a fine of £50 upon anyone who lets off fireworks within five miles of the coast-line, anywhere. I shall have to report you to headquarters. Fall in, men!”

Recognising the seriousness of the business, we younger ones kept discreetly silent, but my father, making a deprecatory gesture, said, “You will, of course, sir, take the steps your duty enjoins, but as we

are all extremely sorry that we have caused you and your men all this trouble, through our ignorance, the least I can do is to offer you, and your men also, some refreshment before you begin your row back!" This, to judge from the men's hoarse "Hear! Hear!" seemed to strike them as a bit of all right. And as our man-servant had now joined us, he and my brothers raided the larder and soon had the dining-room table laden with eatables and beer. While the coast-guards laid their accoutrements aside in the hall, my father took the lieutenant to the library, where a maid, summoned in haste, laid out a special cold collation, and my father, and sisters, now roused and dressed, entertained the arbiter of our fate. The men fell to with a gusto. There was, luckily, plenty of beer and "baccy" in the house, and they presently sang us sea-chanties and so forth, and were plainly reluctant to leave when the lieutenant, fortified by divers whiskies and cigars, gave the signal for departure about an hour later. He intimated, in a cordial leave-taking, that, perhaps, under the circumstances, the affair might be regarded as a harmless first offence. My father was hardly likely to repeat it! "My God, no!" ejaculated he, "pleased as I've been to see you all!" These were, by no means, the sentiments of the rank and file. One of them nudged me, as we accompanied them down to their great life-boat, and I heard a hoarse whisper, "I say, young gov'nor, haven't you any more little sisters' birthdays coming along?"

A further midnight alarm at "Egypt" that puzzled my father as much as it perturbed me—I was fourteen at the time—may serve as a warning to youngsters

how they indulge in tales of mystery. I had been reading Edgar Allan Poe's *Murder in the Rue Morgue* one evening before going to bed in my little room in the square tower of the old house, and fell asleep with my mind full of the story of the gigantic ape that climbed up to the bedroom window and murdered the old lady. I remember listening to the wind howling outside and thinking how easily a big ape could climb up the ivy covering the tower walls. All of a sudden I woke up and distinctly heard someone or something coming down the stairs from the top of the tower. There were three stories above my room, which was level with the second story of the old house. To my horror, the "thing" was a four-footed one! I distinctly heard the sound of the four naked feet, or claws, on the bare boards. With my hair on end I got out of bed, took down the heavy iron bar that closed the shutters of my little window, and pressed my shoulder against the door just as the "thing" passed outside, and into the passage. To my dismay, it seemed to turn into the third bedroom—my father's! Expecting to hear a scream every instant, I went out and followed, counting the doors I passed in the dark. When I opened the Dad's, he called out, "Good gracious, who's there?" I gasped out: "Gus! Where's the great ape?" "Great ape!" he exclaimed, as he lit the candle by his bedside in a hurry. "What great ape?" "The great ape that came down from the tower-top!" I insisted, still grasping my bar and peering into the shadows. "Why, boy!" said my father, "I have been up and down the tower steps. The flag-staff lanyard was making a noise." "You

didn't come down on four feet ! " I said triumphantly. " I distinctly heard four feet," and we both looked round bewildered. The Dad pointed to a chair-back, and fell back, shouting with laughter. He had put on his trousers to go up the tower, and there they hung over the chair-back, with the buckles of the braces that still hung from them, mutely explaining how I had come to hear " four-foot "—or claw—steps !

As another reminiscence of my younger days I may recount a yachting experience. My father knew Captain Legard, the secretary of the Royal Yacht Squadron, very well, and my younger brother and I, then in our early teens, simply adored the genial old sea-dog. He was a retired naval officer ; lived near Egypt House in a large comfortable house above the Green with his old bo'sun, and owned a trim and speedy " fool-proof " yacht, formerly a Revenue cutter. It was the delight of these two old salts to go out at night, the stormier the better, and sail past the " Needles," into the wildness of the English Channel. He took my brother and me out one night, and as we were good sailors and useful for handling ropes, he used to send his man along for us, after that, whenever the weather was specially boisterous. We often sat in the cosy drawing-room at " Egypt," reading and playing cards, and listening to the wind howling round the tower, with a half-hope that the night was too bad even for our gallant captain and his mate. Sure as fate, however, we would hear the front door-bell peal at 8 p.m., as a preliminary to our man's entry with the familiar " Captain Legard's compliments, and would the young gentlemen like to come for a spin ? "

Equally surely there would be a general cry from the family, "You must not think of it! It's sheer madness in such weather!" Of course that settled it! Donning our pea-jackets, mufflers and yachting caps, we would trudge off to the Green, where old Legard would be waiting in the cutter. Dancing up to it in his dinghy, we would be aboard and off, with close-reefed mainsail and jib, for a three to four hours' run out west and back. I must confess my heart was in my mouth half the time at first, while it seemed hard to tell whether the waves that had come over the little yacht had, or had not, shoved her under the surface entirely. However, one had to play the man before one's small brother. Besides which, it was all breathless fun, and the old martinet gave us plenty to do—and, by the way, plenty of rum to wash it down with. "Had to season you!" he said gruffly. Safe back, he would have us up to his house to supper, and send us off with a glass of hot rum punch inside us to stagger some with.

Another imperishable memory is of a wild, stormy morning at Rhyl, North Wales, whither we had been taken for our summer holidays, when I was about fifteen. My two elder brothers and I, with a friend of twenty, had gone down to the beach to bathe, only to find the machines drawn up and the bathing men bdurate about letting anyone enter the water. The breakers seemed to me colossal. After a violent altercation, our friend declared he was going in, anyway, and proceeded to do so, despite the expostulations of my eldest brother and the men round about. He was a fine athletic fellow and eager to show off.

My brother sent me to call the lad's father, and presently the parents and sisters of both families were down on the sands, waving and screaming to the boy to come back. Unhappily, he was already in difficulties, and we could see him at intervals on top of a huge wave beyond the breakers, signalling for help. His mother and sisters collapsed on the sand and mine tried to comfort them, while the father raged against the bathing attendants for not having stopped the lad, and offered them £50, £100, £200 to launch a boat and rescue him. They said gruffly they had no authority over the young man; and though they made three attempts to launch their emergency boat, it was thrown back each time by the huge breakers, and finally smashed. The painful scene lasted till the lad had entirely disappeared; my father taking one distracted parent home, and my mother and sisters the other. The boy's body was washed ashore three days later, to be taken back to Manchester by the family.

This tragic happening made such an impression on me that it was not until I read the consolatory letter from Servius Sulpicius to Tully, quoted by Sterne, that I recovered my sense of proportion. That letter, of course, reads: "Returning out of Asia, when I sailed from Regina towards Megara, I began to view the country round about. Regina was behind me, Megara was before, Piræus on the right hand, Corinth on the left. What flourishing towns, now prostrate on the earth! 'Alas!' said I to myself, 'that man should disturb himself for the loss of a child, when so much as this lies awfully buried in his presence!'" In my eighty years of life cities have been destroyed

by war and catastrophes have been unceasing, yet the death of a single near and dear one has out-weighed that of a million strangers. We are centuries away from "the brotherhood of mankind" !

My next recollection is of a mildly red-letter day of riot, also in the 'sixties, when I was attending King's College School in the Strand. News had come that Garibaldi, then in London, was to receive the Freedom of the City of London, and we were granted a half-holiday to see his procession pass down the Strand. The great gates of the entrance court were closed. We boys swarmed up the ironwork, and exchanged pleasantries and ribaldry with the mob crowded against it outside. Two of our number, finding this tame, slipped out by a side gate, and returned with a half-sack of flour and a large number of small paper bags. These the others filled and handed up to us on the higher parts of the gates to pelt the mob with. Laughter, yells and oaths outside, and cheers inside were the order of the day, followed by reprisals as some of the crowd caught our bags and hurled them back, closed or broken. I have a distinct recollection of the puzzled look on the red-shirted hero's face when his procession at last passed, and during his bowing right and left to the tumultuous cheering of the mob, he caught sight from his open carriage of a large white mass of people and youngsters on our side of the road. At all events it was certainly not an antagonistic demonstration by clerical "Blacks" !

My chief recollection at King's College School is of having received an excellent grounding in a classical education at the hands of the Head Master, Dr. Major.

This white-haired, peppery old gentleman invariably appeared in the classroom of the Upper Sixth, carrying a number of large dictionaries, which he piled on his desk, to hurl at any boys who roused his special ire. As he was frightfully short-sighted, the volume rarely hit its mark, but always found a billet on the head or chest of one in the neighbourhood. Another memorable experience was the receipt of a prize from the hands of Mr. William Ewart Gladstone, already a well-known statesman. I distinctly remember the charming voice and eloquence with which he addressed the school before distributing the awards.

A year or two later, my London school being declared by my family to be making a young Socialist of me, I was sent to finish my education at a Catholic school, Oscott College, a fine structure by Pugin, on the brow of a hill at Edgbaston, near Birmingham. Here I received a further training in the Classics, the severity of which may be judged by the fact that the Principal, Dr. Spencer Northcote (a brother of Sir Stafford Northcote), an Oxford don, who 'verted with Manning and Newman, used to make us of the top form discuss chapters of Aristotle, taken haphazard, without previous study. No Catholics were allowed to go to Oxford, but our course at Oscott, after matriculation, was as exacting as that for a B.A. examination. A day that specially stands out even now, for me, was when we were doing *Æschylus's Prometheus*, and came to the passage where the Titans, Force and Energy, nailed the Demi-god on to the top of Mount Olympus, to be preyed upon by one of Jove's eagles. The scene, and Prometheus's soliloquy when

the Titans retired, struck me as so stupendous in power and tragedy, that I looked round amazed that my class-mates seemed to find "nothing in it." They appeared rather to be in contemplation of other things, say fives or cricket, and to be happy enough in that.

Oscott, till a few years later, was frequented by the sons of many of the oldest Catholic families of Great Britain, as well as by the scions of great families from abroad. In my time, and that of my two brothers, there were the two sons of the Earl of Gainsborough, a Fitzherbert, commonly dubbed "the Duke," owing to his connection with the Mrs. Fitzherbert who married George IV (the marriage certificate is in the archives of the family), Welmans, Poles, de Traffords, Scropes and others, with two young Spanish Marquises, each, curiously enough, bearing the name of the ducal head of the house of the other. A wilder element was provided by the Irish, several of whom rose to distinction, later, in the House of Commons and the subsequent troubles in their native country. One Irish lad bore the curious name—for an Irish Catholic—of Sir John St. George. Another, who made a name for himself later, was George Moore, the novelist, then an object of admiration for his extraordinary knowledge of the pedigree of every prominent race-horse of the time.

A still more notable figure, and a great friend of mine, then and later, was William Barry, a Doctor of Divinity, and presently, at the early age of twenty-four, a distinguished author of clever novels, such as *The New Antigone*, etc., and numerous works on social

and religious subjects. Barry was easily head of the college, and already a fine scholar when he left.

An interesting fact about Dr. Barry is that when he went to Rome, shortly after gaining his D.D., he was, as he told me later, brimful of religious enthusiasm, and all aglow with the anticipation of the atmosphere of holy fervour he would find there. He was bitterly disillusioned when he found the leaders of the Church were treating religion as a side issue, and absorbed in politics, high finance and social questions, such as precedence, and so forth. He had to pull himself together by the thought of the immense power and influence of the Church of Rome, and of the vast mass of the truly devout it numbered. This worldliness in the Holy of Holies of religion assisted later in dislodging the objects of my early veneration from their pedestals.

Besides the games of cricket, fives, wall-tennis, annual sports and so forth, at all of which Oscott could hold its own with schools of like size, it must have been one of the few institutions which clung to the old English game of "Bandy," a kind of super-hockey, played with a ball made of three footballs, one inside the other; the innermost stuffed solid with damp straw. This heavy missile could be "coo-ed," by the iron-bound exaggerated hockey-sticks or clubs used, to the top of the elm trees forming the triple avenue between the goal-posts at each end of the centre one. The game was so rough that no lad under fifteen was allowed to play it. Hare-and-hounds over the lovely valley and woodlands round about, always with 8-foot leaping poles, was also a favoured pursuit.

On wintry nights a strong bevy of us, bearing a great net, with a wide mouth, fastened to two poles, the body of the net tapering to a small closed end, held up by another pole with a lantern attached, would trot in shorts and jerseys from farm to farm, on a circuit of from ten to sixteen miles, accompanied by a sports-master, and put up the mouth of the net against the hay-stacks, the lads beating the stacks with their leaping poles. The small birds in the hay would fly out into the net to the lantern, and would then, after their poor little necks had been duly wrung, be deposited in one or more bags, to be conveyed back to Oscott, and served up next day in great pies. Even after one got one's second wind, it was no joke being one of the two bearers of the great folded net and its long poles, nor of the full bags. Most of the farmers about were delighted at our ridding them of birds they held to be a pest, but when the sports-master happened to be Irish, and not particular whether a farm we came to was on the list of those arranged with, we would have lively times: the schoolboys armed with poles, and the farm-hands with pitch-forks, dogs, and so forth. However, at the farthest farm on the round, a jolly old farmer would generally hale us in to a fine repast of meat, bread and cheese and beer, served by his buxom hand-maids and pretty daughters. Starting at 8.30 p.m., the round would take some three hours, and so home to bed.

Before I left Oscott, at the age of seventeen, I was to have an experience calculated to lift the veil, for a brief period, into the very Holy of Holies of the religious life. A fine young Dominican monk, of

intense convictions and fiery, burning eloquence, came to Oscott and held a three or four days' Retreat. He swept several of us away by his zeal and fervour, and I for my part distinctly underwent the "conversion" or "awakening" eloquently described by Dean Farrar in his *Life of Christ*.

Life has taught me the mainly emotional character of such happenings, but this experience at Oscott certainly left me with a wide understanding for and sympathy with the earnest and even the bigoted of all religions.

CHAPTER III

CELEBRITIES IN THE 'SIXTIES

MY youth may have been an average happy one, but it was certainly unique in its atmosphere of high Art. In the winters in Manchester and the summers in London, we were all taken from the earliest possible age to all my father's concerts and recitals. Whenever my father was at home in the evening he was hardly ever away from his pianoforte, and both our London and Manchester homes were the constant meeting-place of leading musicians and artistes of British and foreign nationality. Jenny Lind stayed with us at Greenheys for a trio of concerts in Manchester; Madame Grisi (the Marchioness di Candia) was seen in our London home; Tietjens, Parepa, Santley, Trebelli, von Bülow, Joachim, Prince Galitzin, Grieg and a host of other notables, including poets, dramatists, sculptors and painters, were familiar at one or the other house. Browning, Thackeray and Ruskin were in and out. Many of them were fond of children, and we knew them well before we were able to appreciate their work.

Santley had an embarrassing trick of making remarks to us boys, seated in the second row of the stalls in the Free Trade Hall, from his seat on the platform when waiting for his cue at an oratorio or general concert. He spoke almost ventriloquially, in a voice that just reached us, and made us giggle, though it plainly

puzzled those around. For instance, he once had to sing Gounod's "Nazareth," with the male portion of my father's chorus of five hundred, and in the pause before it began, told us, quite audibly, to "Look out, boys! These chaps behind think they are going to drown me! Tell me when it's over—if they've managed it!" We naturally blushed and grinned, and then his golden voice soared up distinctly over the roar of the fine chorus. When it was all over, and the tumult and the shouting of the full house had died down, we heard him again, "Well, lads! Did I beat them?" And we nodded our heads ecstatically.

I recall another instance of his breezy geniality, afterwards, at Bournemouth. We were there for the summer holidays, and Santley came down to sing at a concert. The hall was crowded, but he had barely commenced his first song when the doors at the other end were burst open, and a great throng of rough boatmen and fishermen poured in and ranged themselves, grinning, along the wall. Santley looked at them, nodded, said a word to his accompanist, and promptly trolled out, "Hearts of Oak." The impromptu audience joined lustily in the chorus. This was followed, after a thunder of applause, by "The Bay of Biscay," "Tom Bowling," "The Death of Nelson," and so forth, Santley's sea-songs monopolising the whole programme. The cheers at the end were a perfect riot.

At the age of sixteen, I had the memorable distinction of nearly putting Tietjens out in the grand scene of Beethoven's "Fidelio." She was in Manchester with a touring Italian Opera Company, and dined with us prior to taking the title rôle in that

masterpiece. Just as my father was packing her and our family into the carriages waiting for us, I missed my pince-nez. I heard my father shout that if I didn't come at once, I would be left behind, and I grabbed a huge pair of horn-rimmed spectacles that used to belong to my father's grandmother, which just suited me. I caught the 'bus—plus a wiggling—and when we settled down in a stage box, I saw well enough, standing fairly back behind my sisters, seated in front. As the noble opera proceeded, I came more and more forward, till, in the prison scene, when Tietjens, in a page's dress as Fidelio, flung her arms round Gardoni's neck, telling the thwarted governor, in a splendid burst of song, who she was, and defying him, I thrust my head, in my excitement, well over my sisters, and stared for all I was worth. I saw Tietjens stare back, right into our box, and give a gasp. The audience, thinking her overcome by the force of the scene, roared its applause, and she was forced to bow again and again.

I was a little taken aback when, on going round to her dressing-room in the interval, with my father and brother, a boyish figure stormed up to me, took me by the ears, shook my head, and exclaimed, laughingly, "You young rascal! What do you mean by making me almost shriek with laughter in a great moment like that!" Turning to my bewildered father, she explained that just as she had flung an arm round her stage husband's neck, she found herself looking straight into our box, and caught sight of one great round "O" (my open mouth), and two great round "O"s above it (my horn-rimmed glasses),

and had nearly yelled with merriment! This was what the audience had taken for emotion induced by the force of the dramatic situation. I immediately protested that it was to me she owed one of the greatest successes of her career. She dropped me a curtsy, boxed my ears, and gave me a sounding kiss.

A most amusing couple of singers were Trebelli, the great contralto, and Bettini, the accomplished, if somewhat inferior, tenor, whom she had married. They sang admirably together, and with really marvellous passion. Off the platform they quarrelled with even more extraordinary passion. They were at it when coming up the stairs to the artistes' room in the Free Trade Hall, a cosy, decent-sized chamber to the left of the platform and some ten steps lower. In this room they went at it, gesticulating and screaming at each other, despite all efforts to calm them, until it seemed a marvel that people did not rush in from the hall, to stop the putative murder. Once on the platform for their allotted number, they cooed at each other like a pair of love-birds, only to resume their mutual rowing before they were well down the steps again. My father generally had to send after them to tell them they were wanted for an encore, which would be given, this singular pair once again languishing in each other's eyes, and warbling forth ecstatic oaths of undying love for one another, and so *da capo*, till they got into their hansom at the end of the concert, as mutually incensed as ever.

One of the most striking scenes ever enacted at these concerts was at the reappearance of Sims Reeves, after he had disappointed Manchester by breaking no

less than eight engagements, on the usual plea, by Mrs. Reeves, that her husband's throat was in a state that made his singing a criminal act. After the first four announcements that the great tenor could not turn up, advertisements of a further engagement were treated by the public as a farce, and later as almost an insult. When it came to his failing to appear on the eighth occasion, my father wrote, in answer to his fervent apologies and piteous explanations, that this was the end! Never again could he offer him an engagement. Manchester was too furious, he would not dare.

Reeves declared he must make his peace with the town if he had to come for nothing, pay forfeit, advertise at his own expense! Well, between the two, they placarded the town with huge posters announcing Reeves's positive appearance the following Thursday, with bulletins on the Tuesday and Wednesday that he was actually in Manchester, and in fine voice, excellent health, and so forth.

The great hall was packed to suffocation on the Thursday night when the delinquent stepped on to the platform, evidently as nervous as a kitten faced by a bevy of bull-terriers, and bowed to a thrilling reception of dead silence in every part of the house. My father confessed afterwards to have been almost trembling with anxiety when he signalled to his orchestra to commence the accompaniment to the great air, "Waft her, angels, through the skies," from Handel's "Jephtha." Sims Reeves sang it as if inspired, and his glorious notes rang out like a human clarion. He sang to dead silence, a silence that lasted till he had finished, looked round, bowed slightly, and walked quietly off.

The roar of applause that then broke out showed that every man and boy, and many of the women, were shouting at the top of their voices! It failed, however, to bring the pardoned tenor back again; and after three messages to the artistes' room had been equally unsuccessful, the uproar grew so fierce that my father went down himself to tell Reeves that if he didn't come up at once, the crowd would probably wreck the hall. He found the great singer storming up and down the room, and he turned and told my father flatly wild horses would not drag him on to the platform again! He was bitterly angry with himself for having come to Manchester at all, for this d——d concert. Had he not insulted the town beyond all bearing, and now, instead of their tearing him to bits, or at least tabooing the whole occasion, he only had to warble a couple of notes, and there they all were, wanting to lick his boots! He had sung that night better and more fervently than he had ever sung before!—a statement in which my father emphatically agreed with him—and now he wouldn't sing another bar, if they tore the house down! On this my father quietly took him by the arm and led him up the steps, expostulating, but evidently impressed by the violence of the tumult. This swelled still louder when he appeared, and then died down, as the people's still indignant hero bowed almost imperceptibly, and then, after the official accompanist had seated himself at the piano, trolled forth "My Pretty Jane!" with all the irresistible insouciance and—not to put too fine a point on it!—impertinence of which he was so thorough a master. However, had he given them a comic song, it would

have been all the same ! The audience had taken Sims to its heart once more, and he could play on them, or with them, as he would !

I heard, about this time, an amusing experience of von Bülow, Piatti and Joachim. They were giving, one winter, a series of trios in several towns in Scotland, and it happened that the two latter arrived at a certain town in the north, only to hear that von Bülow, who had gone round to visit some friends in another direction, was held up by snow-drifts across the railway lines, and could not arrive in time. The two great string players took counsel together, and asked at the rehearsal in the morning if anyone in the local orchestra could play the piano at sight. The great idea was that he should faintly indicate the pianoforte part, while the two strings accentuated their share in the famous trios advertised. In response to their enquiry a tall gaunt Scotsman in the orchestra arose and announced he could play the piano at sight. However, when seated at the instrument for a "try over," he did not know when to start or when to leave off for a rest, and what he did between times was decidedly mediocre. At last, losing his Italian temper, Piatti exclaimed, "But, my dear sir, you *said* you could play the piano at sight." "An' I can that !" replied the other, "but not at first sight !" Being Scotch, he was evidently better at second sight ! The two visitors decided to play solos !

At the age of seventeen I had finished with schooling and returned to Manchester to embark on the line of life my family had decided on for me : the career of an engineer. Not that it was my own choice ! My

inclinations were decidedly after the higher life, of which I had so full a vision at home. Had I not at the age of two wept bitterly when my nurse insisted on cutting a lovely rose in the garden, exclaiming that I would not have the poor thing "hurt" ? Had I not at the age of ten done the heads of the whole family, life-size, in red chalk in a manner my father declared extraordinarily promising ? Alas ! this line was already monopolised by my eldest brother, C. E. Hallé, and whatever promise I may have shown in this direction was discounted by my own inability to pursue one line alone. I had now turned to writing in my spare time, and evolved reams of verse. A long defence of Socialism, written at the age of fourteen, contained the bold verse :

" The poor go up ; the rich go down ;
Three generations and who knows
This from a peer ; that from a clown ?
As one's surroundings, so one grows ! "

The sentiments of this attempt sufficed to bring on me the wrath of my whole family, and my writing in future had to be done in secret, even after I had left Oscott. I am, however, still of opinion that the six lines below, with which I introduced a tragedy on the " Life of Piers Gaveston," compiled after considerable research, at the age of eighteen, more than justified Robert Browning's dictum that I possessed " poetical gifts of a high order." They ran :

" I drop my lips,
Merely as on a reed, upon my sorrow,
And pipe the young year's anthem, when rain drips
From leafless boughs, that promise leaves to-morrow ;
And meek flower-life, beneath its wintry shroud,
Smiles to the heavens, a smile beyond the cloud ! "

This, however, was declared by my elders to be a fluke, and on the strength of Browning's warning that "poetry was the fruit of a life," it was decreed that I must study life as an engineer. I had, unfortunately, at the age of fifteen, invented and made a model of a repeating fire-arm, which automatically discharged and ejected cartridges fixed on a long tape drawn gradually through the breech. This, though it preceded the machine gun of the same type by twenty years or more, was openly derided by my family, but was held, nevertheless, to show a qualification for an engineering career, and I was entered in 1869 as a premiumed apprentice at Beyer & Peacock's locomotive works, Gorton, near Manchester.

Here I first became acquainted with the British working-man, and conceived a strong admiration for, and sympathy with, him, even if his shortcomings and amusing traits did not entirely escape me.

The first point that struck me was how entirely mistaken my former belief had been that working-men were a solid, homogeneous mass of equals. I found that the men in the gauge room, and the pattern-makers, or woodworkers, were the aristocrats of the Gorton community, with the wielder of the forty-ton steam hammer in solitary grandeur. The erectors came next, with the men in the machine shops on a fair level; the moulders and men in the boiler shops enjoyed a distinctly lower social level, and the strikers in the smithies were almost on the lowest rung. The yard labourers were socially beyond the pale. As to the foremen, they were regarded—with honourable exceptions—as Sir Harry Lauder's "Scotty"

regarded his sergeant; and with good reason, at times!

I was being taught brass-turning, one month, by a bright young mechanic, and found him, one morning, whistling gaily to himself, and working—as he put it—“like blazes!” He explained that his foreman had fixed the price of finishing certain small taps at 1s. apiece, and he saw his way to making enough at it to marry his young woman and take her on a short honeymoon. I congratulated him heartily, and he was as cheerful all day as he proved savage next morning. Asked, “What was up now?” he told me that that so-and-so of a foreman had just been round, counted the taps he had turned out the day before, and reduced his pay to 9d. This meant, the poor fellow said, that he would have to keep up his speed of work for bare tucker, and that his marriage was off again. On my asking why he did not refer the matter to his Trade Union, he said bitterly that Trade Unions were no good for small fry like him. The fact was that that foreman had been a “men’s man” and a loud agitator, so the firm had made him a foreman! He was a “masters’ man” now—“d——n him!”

A particularly nice foreman, to whom I took a great fancy, told me of a dour experience he had just had, of quite another kidney. There had been a public holiday and he had taken his wife and two small children by rail into Cheshire, and walked with them down a pretty road through a wood. Seeing a lovely glade a little way through the trees, they had gone there, and his wife, “as neat a little woman as anyone could wish, had laid out a clean white tablecloth and spread the

plates, cutlery and food, when a burly gamekeeper, with two assistants, all carrying shot-guns, came along, and asked gruffly, 'What the h——l we were doing there? Did we not know these were Lord ——'s woods, and that we were trespassing?' And therewith he kicked our lunch together, and ordered us to pack up and get out! My blood boiled! My wife was in tears, my youngsters howling, and there was I, humiliated before them all. However, we had to clear off and find a grassy bend in the road that was nice enough under the trees, but the day was spoilt, and if I was a mild Radical before, I have been a red-hot Socialist since!" He hardly thanked me for pointing out that, as in my story above, this was a case of "dog eating dog." This gamekeeper was, himself, of the working-class and was far more rough with his class than the owner of the woods would have been. Had Lord —— come by, he would probably have told them to stay where they were, and have sent the children up to the house for cakes and fruit.

But there is no callousness equal to that of one class of working-men to another. Look at the bland disregard that coal and railway strikers show for the sufferings of pottery or other workers who have to stop work on account of these strikes with which they have nothing to do. Look at the strikes in the North of England which, as Lord Jellicoe said, prevented him from getting essential repairs to his warships done between 1914 and 1918!

During my stay at Gorton I was taught woodwork by a clever young pattern-maker who seemed of superior class and well-read. I lent him books on his

telling me he preferred books to some of his fellows : " He could shut them up better ! " He confided to me that his people and he had full proof they were descended from the hero of the " Ballad of Chevy Chase," who, after having his legs cut off at the knee, continued fighting on his stumps. This young man's marked refinement was evidently a case of *noblesse oblige*.

A parallel case was that of one of the premiumed apprentices, son of a leading iron manufacturer of Manchester, who had risen from the ranks. This young man was splendidly developed, and took pride in working in the smithy, where he held his own against any of the strikers, for both strength and endurance. He ended by " humping his swag " and starting off with a fellow-striker, in search of work, thus corroborating a familiar Lancashire saying : that " the father lifts a family from the mud, and a son or grandson puts it back again."

On the whole, my experience of the working-classes then and later has opened my eyes to the strong family likeness underlying the necessarily different refinements of all classes of society.

While living alone at Greenheys for the greater part of the year, I did a really prodigious amount of reading, not only in English, but in French, German, Latin and Greek. My father had brought with him from Paris, after the Revolution of 1848, a large and valuable library, containing, among other things, most of the works of the French writers who prepared the way for the earlier Great Revolution : Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, the unconverted Fénelon, and others, the

brothers Grimm included. The French and German classic poets, and the French, German and English poets, novelists and dramatists were like oysters to my capacious mental maw. I spent my pocket-money at the second-hand bookstalls on anything that took my fancy in the way of serious reading.

When my family was in Manchester during the winter I was again plunged into the musical atmosphere, otherwise my daily hard work as a mechanic was relieved by study at night—often ending at 2 a.m. and including writing—and by boxing lessons with my chum, Harry Ewart (afterwards an engineer at Colombo), who ploughed through the mud or snow with me on our three-mile tramp to Gorton and back. These boxing lessons were to stand me in good stead at the Komati gold-fields, South Africa, in the late 'eighties, thanks to the tuition of the Manchester "Pug," Phil Clair, formerly boxing partner to Tom Sayers.

Three acquaintances I made at this period I shall never forget. One was that of old Sir William Fairbairn, the great engineer, who, with his wife, delighted to have young men to dinner at their charming house in Aldwick Green. I asked Sir William, once, how he could put up with all us youngsters. He replied: "Gus, my boy, the secret of a contented life is: Always frequent the company of your seniors when you are young, and your juniors when you are old." I caught him once looking intently at one of his young guests, and on asking him, later, why? received the simple answer that the lad was the grandson of a Scotch laird, on the croft of one of whose tenants he, Sir

William, had begun life as a scarecrow, at sixpence a week. Sir William had married a cotton operative at the age of seventeen, when he was a mechanic of eighteen, and now they were a refined and courteous old couple, familiar with all the Courts of Europe.

Another great friend of mine was Charles Calvert, whose splendid productions of Shakespeare's plays attracted audiences from London and all over Britain. I had free entry to the Manchester theatres, and knew the exact time to catch Calvert as he reached Oxford Road, on his way to the Prince's Theatre. We would walk up together, he asking me how I liked his delivery of certain lines in the current production. A copious outlay of butter was, I found, acceptable, but I could splash it with conviction as regarded his delineation of Richard III, a character which seemed to suit his somewhat morose nature to a "T," possibly because Mrs. Calvert, though a charming woman, was slightly disposed to favour the airs and graces of Katherine as the unsubdued heroine of the celebrated *Taming*. Calvert himself was hardly a "Petruchio"! One could not help being amused, in his magnificent production of *The Merchant of Venice*, arranged with the assistance of Burton, of the British Museum, to hear Charles, as "Shylock," cry out, "What Jessikurr! I say," to be echoed by Gobo, "What Jessikurr! I say!" but it seemed to suit the simple Manchester audience as well as Irving's "Shall I not have revanche?" in the same character did his London one later.

My father told us of an incident which occurred when two Hamlets, Irving and Barry Sullivan, were to be seen in Manchester in this masterpiece, at the same

time, at two different theatres. The proprietor of the Royal Theatre, Knowles, had the happy thought of inviting the two tragedians to a reception at the Queen's Hotel, and assembling all Manchester's notables to meet them. My father said it would have needed the pen of a Thackeray to describe the portentous occasion adequately. In the first place, the representatives of the two great rivals had to go over the ground previously, and satisfy themselves that if the noble pair entered simultaneously by the two main doors to the great drawing-room, they could, by observing a due pace, arrive simultaneously in front of their host, on a spot previously marked as exactly equidistant from each doorway, in the centre of the chamber. My father said he and the large assembly present were fascinated to watch the stately entrance of the two Princes of Denmark, each attended by his Horatio, King and Queen, Ophelia, Polonius and Osric, and their dignified procession up to Mr. Knowles and his party; the manner in which each Hamlet carried on an affable conversation with his Queen and Ophelia, as if unaware of anyone being about until they arrived at the host; the graciousness with which they returned that host's bow, divided, as it was, fairly between them, and the courtly, if surprised, pleasure with which they inclined their heads to one another, as Knowles seemed to sweep them together by a comprehensive gesture, were, in the language of a later period, "distinctly precious!" Irving, with his long, ascetic face, was suggestive of the "scholar's eye," and Sullivan's fine physique suited the soldier's sword. The Irish Barry's emotional temperament was apparent when I saw him

act in the parapet scene with the ghost. He reeled back and sank on one knee just outside our stage-box, and I noticed he had grown white to the very lips.

A young man whom I grew to like immensely was Cellier, later the composer of "Dorothy." He was conductor of the orchestra at one of the two principal theatres in Manchester, and when the performance was over, he and I, with a quaint old music teacher, who was teaching me singing, a man whom my father declared to be a fine musician, used to go to a quiet pub in the neighbourhood for a supper of sausages, bread and cheese and beer, and discuss the evening's show. My teacher's word for any particular merit in anyone was "Tommy," and for him to say, "Ah! such and such a singer, player, actor, or even clown, had 'Tommy' in him!" was a cachet of considerable distinction. He would say to Cellier, "Ah! my boy, a chap with all the 'Tommy' that you have should not be conducting in a provincial theatre. London's the place for you, my lad!" And this would suffice to set Cellier raving about what he felt he had in him to do, once the fates were fair to him, and so on, *ad infinitum*, with the two of us genially, but sympathetically, pulling his leg. We both believed in him, and I, for one, thoroughly rejoiced at his success with "Dorothy," and sorrowed over his too-early death shortly afterwards.

In August 1870, I joined my people at Tréport, on the Normandy coast, where my father had taken a house for the holidays. When the Franco-German War seemed about to break out, he tried to cry off, but

the shrewd old Frenchman with whom he had to deal wrote that he might come or not, as he felt inclined, but the money would be very useful in the event of war, and he would trouble my father to send it. As there seemed little likelihood of hostilities spreading as far as Normandy, we went and stayed until September 2nd, hearing of Sedan when we reached London. The officers of a regiment of Uhlans occupied our house in Tréport before our lease was up ! The reason for our leaving prematurely was interesting. Night after night we would be attracted by noises in the quaint old market square, and going there would find the fishing population, in their blouses and clogs, in great excitement. A man on a ladder, with a lantern, would be plastering the wall of the Mairie with printed bulletins announcing some tremendous French victory, with tens of thousands of Prussians slain, double the number captured, and generally Bismarck, Moltke and the Crown Princè, or some other Royal general, among the killed. Alas ! When *The Times* reached us next morning, the boot was altogether on the other foot ! Foolishly enough, we used to show the paper round, and get black looks for our pains, till at last Monsieur le Maire called on my father, and told him he had taken the liberty of stopping delivery of our English papers. " But, good gracious ! " said my father, " we are not responsible for the bad news ! " The Maire shrugged his shoulders : " But you are regarded by the people of Tréport as birds of ill omen, and if this had been allowed to go farther, you would have had your house pulled down about your ears one night."

An old retired French colonel whom we knew spoke

in the same strain. "For the common people," he said, "there is little difference between the originator and distributor of ill news. Besides, you are out of place here. When a nation is in its agony, it does not like strangers to be on the watch!" So we folded our tents and stole away.

CHAPTER IV

GERMANY IN THE 'SEVENTIES

THERE being no institution in England in the early 'seventies at which one could get a general engineering education, on leaving Gorton I was sent to the Royal Engineering College, Berlin, after a short period in the drawing office at the Harkorten Works, near Hagen, Westphalia, my father's birthplace, and Duisburg, on the Rhine. My chief recollections of the first period are worth recording in brief.

Passing through Paris *en route* for Hagen, I noticed the Hôtel de Ville was being rebuilt—probably by many of the same men who had destroyed it during the brief orgy of the Commune. The Tuileries was still a ghastly ruin. Otherwise the town seemed in a normal condition : business as usual, and the theatre, etc., crowded : a striking example to the French—who during the last one hundred years had undergone two or three revolutions, two empires, a monarchy or two and several temporary constitutions—of the truth of the saying of a witty, if sarcastic, fellow-countryman of theirs, “ Plus ça change, plus ç'est la même chose.”

In Hagen I was shown by a friendly iron manufacturer a huge consignment of cutlasses, bayonets, knives, etc., all stamped with the name of a certain firm in Sheffield. It was an order which he had just completed and was about to despatch to the firm in

question at that celebrated centre of the British steel trade. We have often heard of British cutlasses the edge of which would be turned by a hard cheese, and of bayonets that twisted into corkscrews when thrust at a moderately tough Fuzzy-Wuzzy in the Soudan, but here was the source of these witnesses to the depravity of a certain class of British manufacturers, before the word "profiteer" had been added to the language. The Germans have been mightily incensed at the significance attached to the slogan, "made in Germany," declared compulsory in Great Britain, later ; but whose fault was it, in face of the above and countless other pieces of evidence, that the significance was well founded, and the compulsion necessary ?

The charm of the scenery and old-fashioned towns of western Germany I found as evident as have all observers, but I noticed a hint of the savagery that underlay the surface peace of the people, in the fact that it was no uncommon thing to be roused from sleep in the middle of the night in the cities of Hagen and Duisberg by the yells of a street-fight, and to find the walls of houses next morning splashed with blood shoulder high. The use of the knife was as common in Germany in those days as that of the fist in England.

A number of the "demobbed" after the Franco-German War had also found a kind of mild "bandit" business preferable to going back to work. I was warned, even in peaceful Hagen, to carry a revolver if out in the country after sunset, and was myself called to the rescue of two ladies who were attacked, on returning from a visit, by a ruffian with a club. Fortunately, before I thought of my revolver, his

“ruffianism” subsided on the ladies, recognising him as an ex-gardener of a friend of theirs, losing their fright and abusing him as the pickpocket he was trying to be.

On a more serious occasion, some ten to twenty men, released from a cavalry regiment, lay in wait in a wood near Hagen for an ex-lieutenant, alleged to have treated them with unusual brutality, and man-handled him in a fashion that consigned him to hospital for six months.

A special interest attaches to the neighbourhood of Hagen as the scene of the activities of the *Vehmgericht*, the secret society of the Middle Ages, which was powerful enough to force an emperor to appear before it. An old farm-house was shown to me as the headquarters of the Council of the Society. In the back room of this ancient building there was still a deep well, midway down which were let into the wall loose round timbers, studded with sword blades, ploughshares, etc., the idea being that anyone thrown into this well, peasant, knight or noble, would be caught by the cutting implements of the first beam, and cause it to revolve and so pass him on to the next, which would repeat the process until his mangled remains came to rest in the water at the bottom.

A gruesome memento of those old times was still preserved in the quaint old castle of Limburg, not far from Hagen, the former seat of Prince Limburg. The last representative of the line left the district in the Revolution of 1848, when the people of the village below stormed the castle without doing any particular damage. It is a lofty structure surrounding a great court, and is set on a wooded hill in most romantic

scenery. In the high trees that nearly filled the court were a number of generations-old peacocks, from whose fierce, sweeping attack the caretaker and I had to defend ourselves with branches as we hurried across from the gateway to the main entrance. They presented a beautiful sight as they soared down with wings and tails outspread. But what particularly intrigued me was a round ebony plate on a small table near a window in the main drawing-room. On this ebony plate, which was covered with red velvet, and under a dull, bell-shaped dome of very old glass, was a woman's little hand, evidently embalmed, with small, beautifully shaped fingers covered with costly old rings ; the hand had evidently been amputated at the wrist, and the stump fixed to a thick pad of red velvet. The ancient retainer who showed me round told me with pride that a certain Princess Limburg some hundreds of years before had had the bad luck to murder her husband, and had been maliciously condemned by the unsympathetic Emperor of that time to have her right hand cut off by the common executioner of the district ; and as she was a high-spirited young lady, she had secured the severed member, had it embalmed and set up in her drawing-room as a warning to all future Limburgs not to let their domestic differences go as far as murder.

Germany has acquired the name of *Verbotenland*, and the number of apparently quite innocent things forbidden by police regulations is appalling. This, however, is a familiar characteristic on the continent of Europe, and my father used to say that when he crossed a new frontier over there, and saw a " guardian

of the peace" in his military uniform, with clanking sword and all the rest of it, he felt that here was his lord and master, whereas when he landed in England and beheld Robert in his peaceful blue he exclaimed inwardly, "Here is my protector."

The way in which the *verboten* decrees are observed in Germany is sometimes humorous. Two young Englishmen at Potsdam, after doing the palaces, found themselves in the park, near the ornamental waters. These are of considerable size, and provide sailing-room for the working model of an English frigate, presented by a former English monarch to some young Prussian princes: a fair-sized ship on which the ex-Kaiser is said to have acquired his early love for things nautical. It was a blazingly hot day, the water seemed alluringly cool, no one was about, and the two young men decided on a swim. They began tentatively to strip and a uniformed keeper strolled by without interfering. Just as they were about to dive in, however, the keeper shouted to them, and hurrying up, announced angrily that it was *verboten* to bathe there. Why had he not told them so before? they expostulated. He had seen them undressing, and had said nothing! "Ja!" he explained, "there is nothing in the regulations about its being *verboten* to undress! Only to bathe is not allowed!" They gave it up!

But the Germans insist they are much freer with their *verboten* than the English with their hide-bound conventions. Two cases that came under my notice in England seemed to support this. Both concerned people who were fairly distinguished. Dr. Richter, as is well known, succeeded my father as

conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, Manchester. He brought with him his wife and daughter. These two ladies would appear at the Thursday concert, one week in evening dress of the latest and most expensive fashion, and bejewelled to match, and sit in the stalls holding their own with the biggest of the Manchester bigwigs. The following week they would appear in the same seats, happy and unconcerned in house dresses that smacked of a late attendance in the kitchen. Again, but for a different reason, they would be the "observed of all observers." The incident showed that Germans will happily do things that English people would not for worlds !

The other case of this slavery of Englishwomen to fashion came under my notice in the 'seventies. We had taken our French brother-in-law to a box at the Haymarket Theatre, at the time when silk or satin "tam-o'-shanters" were all the rage for evening wear. Looking round the house, the stalls and dress circle presented the appearance of huge beds of tulips ! All the women present wore tam-o'-shanters of various brilliant colours, but exactly the same shape. Our Frenchman said such a silly display would be impossible in Paris. There, even if a fashion were generally followed, each woman or girl would vary it a little, to preserve her individuality.

A further instance of cheerful, healthy disregard for silly conventions was supplied at one of our Sunday musical evenings in Mansfield Street. The two drawing-rooms were crowded with a somewhat swagger assemblage, and Sir George Henschel, the great baritone, who was talking, standing, to some old lady

seated, could not find a chair when Trebelli began to sing. He promptly sank down on one knee, and sat on his haunches, quite unconcerned by the curious glances directed at him. The occasion was emphasised to me by a little incident that followed. He sang, presently, Schumann’s “Two Grenadiers” to his own brilliant accompaniment. His voice was always a trifle harsh, if splendidly sonorous; the virile fire and force of it made my father say once that the old bards who encouraged the German tribes in battle must have sung like Henschel. I was standing in a doorway of the room, by the side of an old general who had been frankly bored to death by the preceding high-brow music. When Henschel had sung a note or two, this ancient warrior pricked up his ears like a war-horse, drew himself up to his full height, and listened with his eyes gleaming. When the last phrases had thundered and sobbed out, he turned to me, clapped me on the shoulder, and exclaimed, “There, my boy! That’s what I call music! By Gad! It was like a cavalry trumpet in a fight! I haven’t been so stirred for years!” Henschel was quite pleased when I told him of it.

A fine indifference to other people’s opinions was presented to us at the hotel at Brünnen, on the Lake of Lucerne, also in the ’seventies. We were so large a party that my father had taken the whole annexe for a couple of months, as a convenient centre from which to make excursions, my eldest sister and I often doing “hikes,” as they would now be called, to places of interest twenty-five miles off. Our family meals were brought over from the hotel, about twenty yards away,

and the first day the proprietor, a distinguished-looking man, came over at dinner-time to see if everything were right. He himself handed round a dish of vegetables, and when the meal was over, my father, who had treated him with marked courtesy, asked us with an amused smile if we could imagine a man in England who happened to be an M.P., High Sheriff of a county, Military Commander of a district and several other things as well, handing round vegetables at an hotel that chanced to belong to him.

One man in England who was quite indifferent to anyone's opinion of his appearance was the old Duke of Somerset, who used to go about in an old frock coat and top hat, brown or green from old age. His reply to any of his relatives who expostulated with him was that those who recognised him knew who he was, and he didn't care a d——n for the others !

The French struck me as a little peculiar in some ways. My second sister had married a well-connected cloth manufacturer in Normandy, and we often went to stay with them at their charming place on the Seine, near Rouen, situated on some six islands on that river, connected by old bridges. She had introduced lawn-tennis, which we had already played for years in England, and I remember that two members of a family living barely two miles away were enthusiastic over the game. They were a brother and sister of between twenty and twenty-five, and it struck us as funny that the girl's maid always came over at sunset to walk back with them. One evening she failed to turn up, and the two young people grew so uneasy that at last my sister exclaimed that if they did not care

to wait longer, surely they could walk home by themselves, or would they like her husband to go with them? The boy explained quite seriously it would not do for his sister to be seen walking alone with a man. They might meet someone who did not know he was her brother! In the end my brother-in-law had to take them home.

When my prospective brother-in-law came over to London shortly after the Franco-German War to be married, he brought with him a wealthy aunt and her pretty daughter of about eighteen, both extremely chic, "as a guarantee of good faith and respectability." The afternoon before the wedding I found the two in the drawing-room with my sisters and Henri and was duly introduced. I shook hands with the aunt and turned to repeat the process with the daughter, to find to my surprise that she blushed and looked at her mother. Henri was chuckling. The mother, however, exclaimed: "But do it! The shake-hands is quite *comme il faut* in England." And we did it! I asked my eldest brother later what the fuss was, and he answered: "Don't you know, you young idiot, that no girl in the French Upper Ten is allowed to shake hands with anyone?" I protested that it was a bit thick! Wasn't I to become a sort of cousin the next day? Why, she was so pretty I had thought of kissing her! "If you had," said my brother, "the girl would have fainted and the old one had a fit!"

My sister, instead of swathing her children—when they put in their appearance—like Red Indian papooses, as was the fashion in France at the time,

left their little limbs free to the air and the sun, after the custom in England. This caused the most unholy commotion! All the old tabbies of the neighbourhood and anxious friends as well swarmed round Henri, demanding if he meant to allow his children to be murdered by his silly young foreign wife? He, like a sensible man, refused to interfere. When, however, the first two boys reached the ages of two and three as well-developed sturdy youngsters, and the others threatened to do likewise, a revulsion of feeling set in, and the wives of the workmen at the factory especially began to bring up their children *à la mode anglaise*!

However, the number of French children seems woefully on the decrease, and a striking lesson as to the causes of it was afforded me one day by my brother-in-law. He took me up a hill near his country place, overlooking a very large valley. He pointed out how the whole area was now cut up into various-sized little plots, few of them of more than an acre, or containing more than a small cottage. He told me that in his great-grandfather's time, the whole valley had belonged to one rich farmer, but that, owing to the laws that obliged a man's property to be cut up equally between all his children and the fullness of the quivers of most peasants of the time, there was hardly one of the present generation who owned as much as a decently sized kitchen garden. One man who had died lately had left a single mulberry tree, on a little patch before his two-roomed house, to be sold and the proceeds divided between three children, all, naturally, out at work.

Great ducal families in France arrange by joint agreement that only the eldest son shall marry, and so on as required ; the rest of the sons receive an allowance from the head of the house, a state of affairs hardly conducive to morality.

Another instance I learnt from my brother-in-law did not tend to increase my respect for French law. A number of local landowners had constructed a short length of railway, an extension of a branch Government line, by a duly concluded contract with the Government Railway Department. After a number of years, the Government decided to run this branch line on, to connect with the regular system some distance off. They commenced construction at the end of the privately owned extension, connected up with the main system ahead, and proceeded to run the whole stretch as part of the general Government railway system. The private owners of the extension presented their bill, pushed the matter in Paris, and finally took it to court, but never succeeded in obtaining a sou of compensation, or of joint profits. Government had simply swallowed up their venture !

My chief recollections of my time in Germany are first and foremost of the high-class musical fare I was privileged to enjoy at Joachim's house, owing to his long acquaintance with my family in England, and at his quartette concerts, to which I had free entry. His quartette was probably one of the finest of the day, and as each concert consisted of three quartettes by the great masters, one was fairly soaked in music of this ultra-high description ; candidly speaking, I was only beginning to be initiated into its mysteries by the time

I left Berlin, and preferred the more general music, instrumental and vocal, I heard at Joachim's house. This was practically open on Sundays, for the whole day, to all leading local and foreign artists then in the town, as well as to notable savants and literary men. Madame Joachim once sang a setting of Petrarch's Sonnets, which I still remember as most striking.

A notable occasion was a visit to Berlin of Richard Wagner. The musicians of the town gave him a concert, and Joachim got an orchestra together of some sixty leading instrumentalists, playing first violin himself, Wagner conducting. The programme was, naturally, pure Wagner, and the rendering superbly impressive. The hall was crowded with the élite of Berlin, and the concert a conspicuous success. At the end of the first half, however, a curious incident occurred. Wagner did not leave the platform, but sat back in his seat, toying with his score; seeing which, and apparently realising that the orchestra must also remain where it was, Joachim laid his violin down, approached the great maestro, exchanged a word or two with him, and returned to his chair, evidently rather perturbed. I asked him afterwards what it meant, and Joachim told me, rather plaintively, that he had gone up to Wagner, innocently enough, to congratulate him on the triumph of the evening, and had been met by a wave of the hand, and the curt remark, "Please return to your seat. I do not care for these manifestations of camaraderie!" (*diese collegialische Kundgebungen*). Joachim was a dear, shy and modest innocent, and asked me what I thought of it. "After all," he said, "he may be Wagner, but I am Joachim,

and I had arranged this voluntary orchestra ! ” I told him bluntly that the great “ R. W. ” might be a great musician, but all the same he was a snobbish ass. At which, good old Joachim was greatly shocked.

Joachim had been very much hurt by another eccentric genius before this in London. He had expressed a desire to meet Carlyle, whose work on Frederick the Great had greatly impressed him, and one of my sisters arranged an interview, and took him to Cheyne Walk one afternoon. Carlyle was walking in the garden at the back, and Joachim was taken to him. The two had hardly gone the breadth of the garden together when Joachim stopped abruptly, hesitated, and slowly made his way back to the house. On my sister asking what the trouble was, he said rather dejectedly that Carlyle had interrupted his references to the Great Frederick by the blunt question, “ You are a Jew, are you not ? ” and as Joachim confessed the soft impeachment, had added, “ Ugh ! there never was a Jew worth anything ! ” On which poor Joachim had felt that there was nothing to do but to leave the famous Thomas to continue his ramble and his pipe alone, which the latter did, quite unconcerned. “ It is not,” explained Joachim to my sister, “ as if it were true : Cavour was a Jew, and Mazzini, and Mendelssohn,” and he proceeded with his list. My sister had to console him with further instances of the sage of Ecclefechan’s customary rudeness : such as at a great dinner-party in London, hearing a self-made Gorgius Midas bragging he made his secretary dispense £5,000 a year in charities, though he never cared where it went, so long as it was

a full five thousand, Carlyle leant across the table and jerked out: "Ech, mon! but ye're a puir, weak, mean, meeserable creature!"

But the German artiste could be biting enough on occasion. There were two rival leading tragedians at the Royal Theatre, who hated one another as fervently as any character they portrayed on the stage ever hated any other. One evening they met in the wings, and said A to B, looking around for something as he did so, "But where is your dog?" "Dog!" snorts B, "I have no dog!" "So!" exclaims A blandly, "then what did the Intendant mean by asking the stage manager just now, 'Where is that dog of a B'?"

I was a constant attendant at both the opera and the theatre, as, fortunately, prices were phenomenally low to all parts of the house—a distinct cause for rejoicing, considering that, when taking one of the many charming young American or Canadian girls studying in Berlin to either, American etiquette demanded that one took her in a first-class *droske*, gave her a bouquet, took a box for her, and suppered her at a restaurant in Unter den Linden afterwards: a fairly costly business, and the grim joke about it was that the sweet young thing generally had an allowance from her "Pop" per month that would have kept one in treble comfort for a year. I must have been very green at the time, or I would never have allowed a Russian prince (he was staying at the Russian Embassy) to join my twosome with his evening's partner, a friend of my ditto, for the supper part of the business, and leave me to square up for the foursome, on the plea that he had not enough with him, but that presentation of his

card at the Embassy next day, in case his man failed to find me in at my address, would see the matter regulated. I let the matter slide for a couple of days and then, the Embassy being close at hand, called in out of curiosity. "Oh yes! Prince—— [name unpronounceable] had stayed there," but had left for St. Petersburg by an early train the morning after he had rooked me for two or three pounds!

The performances at both houses were magnificent; the soloists of the opera of European fame—a tenor named Betz, a huge, finely proportioned man with a glorious voice, making the finest Lohengrin in my recollections of Faure, de Reske, and a dozen Italians. All the leading men were six-footers, and as the chorus was selected from the Guard Regiments, the opening scenes in "Lohengrin" formed a curious contrast to the sight presented at Covent Garden, with principals and chorus ranging from 5 feet 6 inches to 5 feet 9 inches. Betz, by the way, was said to have a capacity for unlimited beer. His voice thrived on it, anyway!

The acting at the Royal Theatre was most distinguished, and the leading actor, being on a State salary, with pension to come, could and did take any part in which he saw neglected opportunities. For instance, he made quite the most delightful Feste, the clown, imaginable.

To see the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen's Company, with its incomparably finished Shakespearean productions, was an event which could never be forgotten. The murder scene in *Julius Cæsar*, and the riot after Mark Antony's harangue, are vivid to my eyes to this day.

I saw more of Shakespeare's plays during two years at Berlin than in my whole life in England, and all were excellently done, except that *The Merchant of Venice* was treated too much as a farce for my liking.

I met many distinguished men at Joachim's: historians, scientists and so on, and they were unfailingly nice to me as a young Englishman with a notable father. I remember one of them, a professor of history at the University, asking me what German authors I had read, and hoping I was not taking Schiller too seriously as a poet. He said Schiller's name would always live in Germany, but as the historian of the Thirty Years War. That work, he said, was a monumental account of a war which had put Germany a full century back in civilisation, its effects being still perceptible. This view of things German was endorsed for me by a lecture delivered shortly afterwards by the Principal of the Engineering College at which I was studying. He said in it that the cultural taste of the mass of the German people was absolutely deplorable. The fact of the matter was, that the thoughts of German men were occupied with things military. Immense progress was certainly being made in every branch of trade, industry and invention. Science and every line of learning were also making great strides, but literature, music and painting already grovelled before this new craze for war, and—mostly faked—warlike traditions of the old Germanic people.

Helmholtz and his wife were frequently at the Joachims', and were most charming people. He told us of a curious experience he had had at Cremona. He said that in that birthplace of great European

violins, he had obtained permission to examine the collection of violins of every age and country, housed in the local museum. He had taken a little draught-making machine with him, and blew a blast of air through the "S" holes in the top of each of a number of violins. He found that the best makes by Stradivarius, Guarnerius, Amati and others, all gave the note "C," as also, strangely enough, did the best Chinese fiddles, square and triangular-shaped; earlier and later violins, and inferior ones generally, ranged down to "B" and up to "D." He stopped at this, and when Joachim quietly asked what Helmholtz had deduced from these observations he replied that he had not gone farther into the matter. Like a true scientist, he had established a fact and was content to leave it.

Another interesting personage to whose house I had the entrée through my American friends was that of Bancroft, the historian, then United States Minister at the Court of Berlin. He told me two amusing stories. One year on the eve of the Emperor's birthday he instructed his major-domo to be careful to hoist both the German and American flags on top of the Ministerial buildings (they had not yet been raised to the dignity of an Embassy) next morning.

Chancing to go out next day early, he noticed a German general on the other side of the road looking up with a quizzical expression. Bancroft crossed over, to be met by the officer, whom he knew well enough, with a smile, and the remark, "Well, Bancroft, and since when has the United States taken over the German Empire?" And he pointed to the top of the

Ministry. Bancroft looked up and saw to his horror that his fool of a retainer had certainly hoisted the two flags, but both on the same flag-pole, with the Stars and Stripes on top !

Another yarn is that, having to send a code message to the United States Government, and wishing to spare the cable company as much as possible, Bancroft simply addressed it, "Fish, Boston," and despatched it. Some days later it came back to him, marked, "Not known in Boston, Lincolnshire, England." He was so irritated that he wrote out the address anew thus : "The Honourable James Fish, State Secretary of the United States Government, Government Buildings, Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America, North America," and when the cable people sent over to expostulate, on the ground that the German Finance Department would create an ungodly row over the thing (cable rates being then half a crown a word and ambassadorial and ministerial messages being paid for by Germany), Bancroft was obdurate : "If 'Fish' and 'Boston' were not known to Berlin as appertaining to leading American affairs, it was high time the town had a lesson."

Thanks to my friendship with a young Artillery officer, I was invited to a great military dinner at the leading restaurant in Unter den Linden. The whole affair was most brilliant, and the display of uniforms simply gorgeous. Every half-dozen or so of the company formed a party, half on one side of the table, half on the other, and each little group paid for its own drinks and smokes, I, as a guest, being free, though I was politely consulted as to the wines. I

ventured to remark that they were all talking of having the cheaper wines first, and the more expensive ones later. I suggested it seemed more reasonable to have the better ones first, while still able to appreciate them. This was greeted with a roar of delight. "No, my dear fellow! Let us have the cheaper wines first! Later on we shan't care what we pay!"

The evening was certainly an uproarious one, what with our toasts, songs, chaff and anecdotes that presently became as blue as the smoke-laden atmosphere. The long tables had been arranged down the sides of the huge hall, leaving the centre with its two rows of brass pilasters free. A group of officers began to gather, and it transpired that one of them had bet another a dozen bottles of champagne he could not climb to the top of one of these brass pillars. The other was so far gone that he came down with a run from about five feet up. He at once bet his challenger another dozen of the "boy" that he couldn't do it either. He could not, and the challenge was passed round. In next to no time, each pillar was the centre of a group of more or less inebriated officers, egging each other on to do the trick, and all yelling and laughing and crying with delight at each failure, while the waiters were emptying the champagne cellars of that restaurant and its neighbours on to the tables. Only one trier, a naval lieutenant, succeeded in the job, but the place was a bedlam before this stopped the thing. While at its zenith, I stumbled, in moving from one group to another, over a fat little major in a tight-fitting Hussar uniform, sitting on the floor with

an empty champagne bottle between his fat little knees, and industriously trying to climb up it !

I had paid particular attention to bridge-building and higher mathematics in my two years in Berlin. As to bridge-building I was immensely tickled one day when our professor, after filling five or six large black-boards with algebraical signs and figures, looked with pride at the result of his labours and announced : " That, gentlemen, is the formula for finding the strength required in the keystone of any arched bridge you may have to design. But I would strongly advise you not to use it ; and when you have to build such a bridge, pick out an old Roman bridge of suitable size and form, and copy the dimensions given in any good book of reference." Advice which I religiously followed in my bridge-building work in South Africa later. The bridges I copied had stood two thousand years, and my copies have stood for fifty years—so far—and are still going strong !

And so back to London and thereafter to South Africa.

These years were not quite empty of romance for me : Bertha von B., an acquaintance of mine, was engaged to a young Cuirassier officer, Baron Bernard von B. At the great feast on the eve of the wedding, celebrated with true German lavishness in eatables, drinkables, songs and presentation of presents, she asked me to take her into the garden, out of the heat and the uproar. Walking among the flowers in the moonlight, this surprising young lady suddenly threw her arms round my neck, kissed me and asked me quite calmly to run away with her then and there !

“I have plenty of money of my own [her uncle had left her a fortune], and Bernard is so big and rough, he frightens me! We need only get something to cover our evening clothes, walk to the local station, and wait for a train to Cologne, and so to your people in London!” I was busy explaining that in London I was a “detrimental,” a young man allowed to flirt, because unable to afford a wife, and that for a “detrimental” to marry a girl for her money wasn’t good form at all, when “Bernard” came down on us like a wolf on the fold and chaffed me for “trying to run off with his bride” [sic!].

CHAPTER V

SOCIETY IN THE 'SEVENTIES

RETURNING to London in 1876 I began to have a good time of it all round. Living in my father's house—chiefly, it seemed to me, that I might be available to accompany my sisters to “crushes,” dances, theatres, etc., I was burning the candle at both ends, working all day and frivolling all night. Of my first short experience as Assistant Locomotive Superintendent on the South-Eastern Railway, my chief recollection is that on quitting Cannon Street Station at 5 p.m., I had to leave behind me a written statement as to where I could be found at every hour between then and 9 a.m. next morning, when I was expected back at the office. This was in case a relief gang, under my charge, but composed of a competent foreman and capable men, had to be sent anywhere down the line to deal with an emergency. These occasions generally occurred in winter, and I was twice fetched out from dances at South Kensington, in the small hours, to find a hansom waiting to bowl me down to Cannon Street at express speed. There I would transfer my person into work-a-day toggery, with fur cap, huge railway overcoat and thick gloves, and nip into a first-class carriage with the foreman, always a decent, pleasant fellow, with the men in a third-class behind, and set off for the scene of disaster as swiftly as our engine could

rush us. There was always an excellent stock of provisions aboard, food, drink and smokes for all, and any sufferers we might find. The two occasions in question meant nothing worse than to clear the line on a farther section from a heavy drift or fall of snow. In the first case, I distinguished myself by jumping out of the carriage on the wrong side, and landing up to my neck in snow; a contretemps which necessitated my standing on the footplate for half an hour to dry, the further proceedings of the gang devolving on the foreman. The second incident was a narrowly escaped disaster. A heavy fall of snow had taken place at the Dover end of Shakespeare's Cliff. These cliffs bend about a bit, and the line runs alternately through tunnels and on 60-foot trestles connecting one tunnel with the next. The foreman and I had gone on the engine's footplate for warmth and company. It was 2 a.m. and bitterly cold and windy, and our little train, with its company of twenty or more human beings, was running through one of these tunnels when I saw the driver and fireman jump at the levers like mad, and work them energetically, shouting excitedly to one another. The train drew up with a series of jerks that nearly threw me into the fires, and as we came to a stop, I noticed a red lamp glimmering between the rails barely 10 feet ahead of our headlights. A watchman, white with snow, and evidently exhausted, came to the engine steps, and when we had given him a drink told us that the snowfall we were called to was beyond the length of tunnels and trestles altogether, but that he had walked down the last of the tunnels to see if the trestles between it and the tunnel

in which we had pulled up were all right. He had found that a number of them had been broken down by a further heavy fall from the cliffs, and by superhuman efforts he had climbed down the nearest trestle, floundered through the snow, and climbed up the trestle nearest our tunnel just in time to put his red-light lamp down between our rails to save us from plunging some 60 feet down through broken wood-work and snow. There was, of course, nothing to be done but to get into our compartments again and toddle back to London to report, taking our watchman guardian-angel with us. A cursory examination had revealed the need for several days' repairing work.

We received word one day that H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh would arrive at Dover from the Continent at a certain hour on the morrow, and my chief, Mr. Watkins, and I were instructed to meet, receive him, and accompany his train to London. We got down to Dover, in time for a lunch at the chief hotel before the boat's arrival, and naturally had champagne to celebrate the occasion. After showing the Royal party to their saloon on the boat train, with all due courtesy, Watkins, who prided himself on his skill as an amateur engine-driver, announced his intention of tooling the train up to London himself. The grizzled old engine-driver, specially selected for the job, frowned and shook his head. He told Watkins that his father, Sir Edward, the Company's chairman, wouldn't like it, even if Mr. Watkins hadn't just lunched at the hotel. However, this was a particularly ill-advised remark to make to his boss, and Watkins persisted. He certainly took us up the line in

grand style, quite disregarding the old driver's repeated protests, and when we drew into Cannon Street Station, clapped the latter on the back, with a "There, old boy! Could you have done it in better time yourself?" The driver said nothing, but got down and peered under the engine. Then he beckoned to Watkins and pointed to the axle of the driving wheel. It was all aglow! "There, sir!" he said gravely; "if we had had half a mile farther to go, or had met with any little obstruction these past two miles, that there axle would have whipped off like a carrot!" Watkins whistled, and as he stood there the Duke's equerry bustled up and said that H.R.H. wished to speak to Mr. Watkins. We accompanied him back to where the Duke stood, and Watkins had the dubious satisfaction of being shaken by the hand and warmly thanked for the most pleasant and exhilarating jaunt His Royal Highness had ever enjoyed!

The following year I obtained an appointment on the construction works of the Albert Dock, on which job I remained for four years. There is no need to dilate on this great engineering work. It meant digging out 94 acres of ground from 6 feet below Thames high level to 32 feet and surrounding the whole by concrete walls 26 feet wide at the foundation. A railway tunnel beneath the passage connecting the Albert with the Victoria Dock, some three miles of goods sheds, with railway lines back and front, and 1,000 yards of wooden wharfage about 50 feet wide, on five rows of piles 13 inches square, were mere frills to the main undertaking. I was in sub-charge over some 2,000 men, and learned to admire the magnificent

physique of the British navy, the rough good humour and sound sense of all the classes of workmen. What I also came to "admire" in another sense was the curious notion of loyalty all round. The men who held the level staffs on the preliminary survey to establish the average depths of these marshes below Thames high water for purposes of estimating the excavation to be contracted for, would balance their staffs on tufts of grass, or in any little depression near the pegs of measurement, as they chanced to be working for the contractors or for the Dock Company's engineers. I noticed also that some of the gangers could make a tape measurement vary by 3 inches in a yard, if measuring up for their masters or for fellow-men. In a huge job of excavating 94 acres to a depth of 26 feet, differences could obviously mount up enormously. Abstract exactitude, with full justice to all, is plainly not to be found in industrial undertakings, any more than in financial activities of the Witwatersrand variety.

It was only possible to drive the 13-inch piles for the outer wharfage at low tide; and as we had to accommodate ourselves to high and low tides two hours later every day, this business of following the tides with our pile-driving necessitated a lot of nightwork. It was manageable enough up to ten o'clock, and even up to midnight. One could go to a theatre in London, and nip back in time to get into the Thames mud in one's "thigh boots" and pea jacket, muffler, etc. When low tide, however, fell due about 2 a.m., I would get back to the works about 9 or 10 p.m., wrap myself up in a blanket on the office table, and wait to be waked

up by the foreman at about 1.15 a.m. The barge with the pile and pile-driver would have been slung out on the mud before this, and I would set up my theodolite in the mud and line the men in with their pile, by means of candles, boning-in staffs, measuring tapes, etc. All this with a temperature down below freezing, liquid mud, of an intolerable stench, up to and often over the tops of one's thigh boots, a howling wind generally blowing sleet or snow into one's face and making one's sight indistinct, and to crown all, the barge-men and pile-men sleepy and ill-tempered. If a pile went askew after a dozen blows or so, it would have to be hauled out again to the music of much profanity. Each pile had to take three blows from a 150-lb. hammer without sinking $\frac{1}{16}$ inch before it was said to be driven home. A pretty job!

There was a very intelligent, hard-working foreman carpenter on the job, who had put by a decent sum of money. He announced one day that he had obtained an assisted passage to New Zealand, and a grant of Government land on the usual terms. He gave notice, and was treated generously enough by the firm. The men gave him a rousing farewell when he came to say good-bye. He told me he had sold up his furniture and sent his, and his wife's luggage down to Southampton, and she had gone to see her mother for the last time, and would be ready to meet the afternoon train to Southampton with him. She had their tickets and papers in her hand-bag. Well, off he went, and I was amazed to see him walk into the office three days later. He said he had come to ask me to use my influence to get him his job back. "But," I ex-

claimed, "I thought you well on the way to New Zealand." And then it came out. He had gone home to find everything shut up, and as time was getting on he went off to his mother-in-law's, only to learn that his wife had not been there at all! Hastening back, a neighbour told him his wife had been fetched away earlier by a friend of his. He went to the station, hoping to find her waiting there, but was too late! The train had left half an hour before, and, as far as he could discover, a couple with a lot of luggage, answering his wife's description, and curiously his own, had gone with it! He got down to Southampton early next day, but the boat had sailed, and a married pair with it, in his name, and with his luggage and all his papers! They would have no trouble in getting his grant of land when they arrived in New Zealand. He was left stranded and homeless with only a pound or two in his pocket, and unless he could get his job back, would be on the streets. Luckily the place had not been filled, and he had no difficulty in getting reinstated. He knew the blackguard who had served him this abominable trick, and now remembered things that explained his wife's share in the shabby business. I tried to console him by saying that he was cheaply rid of such a baggage, and that he should do well now as a bachelor, and curiously enough he did! At all events, some thirty years later, when I was an editor in Durban, a well-set-up and well-dressed man came into my office and asked if I remembered him? He was my old friend, the foreman carpenter. He had saved enough in time to emigrate to South Africa and set up as a contractor, and was doing good

business. He had never bothered his head about the truants.

We used to hear some quaint stories from Custom House officers when they occasionally strolled over from the Victoria Dock to see how we were getting on with our job; this is one. A sailing-ship arrived from the Far East in the Victoria Dock, and my informant was the Customs man who had to go through the cargo. The papers mentioned a large barrel of a valuable green grass-oil, used in the manufacture of sweets. The officer was instructing his men to take the top off, for examination of the contents, when the grizzled old captain called to them to mind how they went about it, "His old woman was inside!" The officer asked him sharply, "What the devil he meant?" He explained that his wife had made his last trip with him and had died "out there." As she had wished to be taken home and buried in his native village in Devonshire, he had broached this barrel of grass-oil, as he had heard it had rare qualities as a preservative, emptied a third of the oil "into that there smaller barrel," pointing to where it stood, and had plumped the old lady "into the big one!" The Customs man stayed proceedings while he sent to the Head Office for instructions, and presently one of the chiefs came down and was told the story. Only half believing it, he had the top of the barrel removed with every care, and there the body of the old woman was, perfectly preserved and looking like a statue in greenish marble, through the preservative virtue of this "fine oil." The Customs chief informed the captain that this was no light matter,

as the value of the oil was £200 or £300. The old sea-dog replied that that did not matter a damn. He would pay up readily, to meet his old partner's wishes. He was a warm enough man! and he then and there signed a cheque for the amount required. The Customs people had a decent, if oddly shaped, coffin made, and got a local clergyman in for a reverent treatment of the poor old soul on her due conveyance to her last resting-place. When the transfer from barrel to coffin had been made, to a brief religious ceremony, the Customs officer told his men to tip the oil into the dock and break up or burn the barrel. "No, you don't!" said the old captain. "I've paid full value for that oil and it's mine to take away!" The Customs people had to agree that this was so, but one of them had the curiosity to ask what he meant to do with the stuff. "Um," he said, scratching his head, "there's plenty of folk makes sweets down in the East End here, and I expects to do well selling it retail!" The story got about the Docks, and the married men swore lustily they would see to it that none of their children ate sweets made in those parts for a year or two!

To come to the doings of people at the other end of the social scale at the time, I may add my own private testimony to the fact that people, young, middle-aged or old, of the third quarter of the last century were not the stodgy crowd that the bright young things of to-day picture them. A London Season of those days was no less brilliant than exhausting. A "professional beauty," as the slang of the day called the specially lovely ones, whom people stood on chairs to look at,

told me once that she had seventy-three engagements already for the coming week ! In my own small way, though I had to catch an underground train at 6.30 a.m. to get to the Docks by 8.30, and only got back home by 7 p.m. for dinner, I managed once to get through twenty-three invitations, etc., in three days, including three dinners, two theatres and six dances.

I woke to the call of a damnable alarum clock, had a cold bath, found breakfast laid for one ; boiled two eggs in an egg-boiler, coffee in a similar machine, caught my train out and ditto back in the evening, then had a warm bath, and if nothing was on till 11 p.m. had a snooze after dinner before putting on war-paint. I have spoken already of special doings at the John Penders' and Lord Leighton's and of the Tennyson glorification at Lady Airlie's ; but to talk of dances, one that I specially remember was at Lady Henniker's, because one or other of the wild Beresfords distinguished himself, as people were leaving, by pushing a "linkman," as the men who yelled for the carriages were still called, into Mrs. Cavendish-Bentinck's brougham with that dignified lady, slamming the door and sending the vehicle off despite the protesting shouts of the two occupants. The madcap had made escape more difficult by filling one of the pockets inside the two doors with strawberry ice-cream and the other with lobster salad. Venetia Cavendish-Bentinck, the stately daughter, found herself installed in a hansom with a young Austrian attaché whom she did not know from Adam, and who was probably as alarmed as she, and sent on her way, with instructions to the driver

overhead to follow the family brougham in front and not stop for anyone !

I remember asking one of three pretty sisters, of whom I could only see two present, at a dance, at, I think, Lady Bunbury's, where her youngest sister was, to receive the somewhat surprising reply, " Oh, she's at home with the measles ! " I had, however, hardly digested this information and its possible repercussions, when we were signalled to stop. " I wonder what Mamma wants now ! " remarked my fair partner testily. What " Mamma " wanted was to tell her daughter to find her sister at once, as their fussy hostess insisted on their all going home instantly, and had " had the impertinence to say they should never have come ! "

Fancy-dress balls were all the rage at the time, and I had found out from my brother, C. E. Hallé, the address of a wonderful old bird, who possessed volumes of illustrations of costumes of all ages. He was constantly making glorious habiliments for all the leading painters in London for pictures of every century, and I easily persuaded him to loan me very striking dresses at £3 3s. a night, far less than the cost of having one made. I nearly met with disaster, however, on one occasion. Mrs. Bevan, the banker's wife, was giving a specially swagger fancy-dress ball, and I went to my provider, to find that he had just completed a splendid costume of a fifteenth-century Venetian nobleman for Lord Leighton. I remember it had red sealing-wax shoes, turned up at the toes, and down at the ankles, black tights, a Vandyke-brown tunic, bordered with purple fur, tight sleeves slashed at shoulders and elbow

with dark-red silk, lace ruffs at wrists and neck; a circular cloak of rich purple, lined with sunset-blue silk, with a round hole for the head, and gathered up on the right shoulder by a large imitation gold and jewelled brooch; and finally a circular red sealing-wax hat, with a peacock feather stuck at the side. The old boy flatly refused to loan me this. Leighton would drop him like a hot potato if he knew it had been out of his custody for an hour. However, on my assuring him that there was no chance of the artist putting his nose into anything so frivolous as a fancy-dress ball, he relented, and let me have it for the night at the usual figure and threw in a property gold chain which went twice round my neck and hung well down in front. I borrowed a genuine gold Russian barbaric cross, some 4 or 5 inches across, from one of my sisters to hang from this and a property jewelled belt and dagger from my artist brother. My hostess said mine was easily the best dress in the rooms and badgered me to know who had made it for me. My enthusiasm over the stir I was making was dashed when Lord Leighton himself came striding up to me with: "Gus! Where the devil did you get that costume? You've been to So-and-so!" "Never heard of him!" I answered; "why? Do you like it?" "Like it, you young monkey! It's my own special design, my property!" "I like that," I retorted; "I suppose this cross, this belt and this dagger are yours, too?" This cooled him down a little, and he went off, saying he would be at the costume-maker's by 9 a.m. next day.

But I was there at 7.30 a.m. and got a wiggling for

not telling him Leighton was to be present. But when he saw how careful I had been with the thing and told him how I had put the great artist off, he calmed down, put the dress away with an unsampled pair of tights, and the incident passed off.

I knew a very jolly girl, a Lady Margaret . Her father and brothers belonged to a rather fast set and couldn't be bothered by dances, and as she had no sisters and her mother was an invalid, Lady M. would have had rather a poor time of it if she had not been allowed to go to dances and balls chaperoned by the different hostesses. We were both good dancers, and as we had a number of mutual acquaintances we met fairly often and danced a great deal together. If she were going to a dance to which I had no invitation she got me one, and vice versa. We would often manage to have three balls on our list for one night. I would meet her at the first, and have some dances and refreshments with her, after which she would make her excuses to the hostess. I would be ready downstairs to show her to her family coach. It would drive off and pull up a few doors down. I would have gathered my things to "catch the bus up," slip in, and so on to the next engagement; repeating the performance afterwards. It cost me half a sovereign in tips to her two men each time, but as a variation on the theme "Dance Partners" it seems as original as non-boring.

Another form of entertainment was got up by some twenty to thirty of us, in the shape of cotillion parties. We held one a week for some time, from 8.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m., and for each one tried to invent new and surprise turns. I remember that one evening, at

Lord Claud Hamilton's in Portland Place, in a new sort of Musical Chairs, with chairs set wide apart in a puzzle pattern, with an uncommonly pretty girl to be danced with by the man who guessed the puzzle position and reached her first, two chairs had their legs broken, though they looked too substantial to succumb to anything below giant power. On another occasion Sir William Vernon Harcourt, then a Cabinet Minister, was present. He was getting on in years and rather fat and pompous. The cotillion figure chosen was that in which a man has to sit on a chair in the middle of the room and ring a bell until a girl asks him to dance. One of the younger daughters of the house, from a spirit of mischief, led Sir William out, plumped him down on the chair, handed him the bell and hurried away. The distinguished statesman seated himself more comfortably, looked round with an affable condescending smile, and gently rang his bell with the air of a three-tailed bashaw throwing his handkerchief to the houris of his harem, but not a girl approached his magnificence. Poor Sir William looked nonplussed at first and then proceeded to shake his little bell more and more furiously, but to no purpose, till at last he called out in a voice of thunder : "This is disgraceful ! It's a scandal !" By this time the hostess and her eldest daughter had been attracted to the room, and the latter promptly went to the relief of the outraged Minister.

Another evening I remember was at Tom Brassey's house in Park Lane. Brassey, afterwards Lord Brassey, was reputed a millionaire, consequent on his father's success as a contractor. His house in

Park Lane was the scene of much magnificence, and the entertainments he provided for his guests were on a scale of lavish splendour. On this occasion he had engaged, among other attractions, the Blue Hungarian Band, lately come to London, and we younger ones danced to its strains later in the evening. Madame Sarah Bernhardt and Got were there to recite, and other leading artistes to sing. We had known the Brasseys for years, and on my eldest sister complimenting him on the success of the evening, he replied with a shrug and his usual diffident smile, "Yes, I suppose everybody who is anybody is here to-night, and I suppose they would come every time I offered them a £5,000 show, but quite half of them would never dream of asking me to a small dinner or dance."

An interesting incident occurred earlier in the evening. The butler approached Brassey, and informed him that Madame Sarah Bernhardt had arrived and had intimated that she neither could nor would leave her carriage until Mr. and Mrs. Brassey came to its door to receive her! "The devil she won't," exclaimed Brassey to one or two of us near. "Of all the cheek! When I have had to send her a huge cheque, too!" and he strode off. We heard from him, later, that when he reached the carriage door, the Divine Sarah had coolly asked, "And where is Mrs. Brassey?" to which sturdy Tom had replied, in a tone of frigid finality, "Mrs. Brassey is at the head of the stairs receiving her guests, where she hopes to receive you also." On which Madame Sarah thought better of it and allowed Tom to offer his arm and pilot her up.

About this time I received an invitation to a "soirée," as the invitation ran, at the house of a contractor, who, though already doing big work, and later on knighted, might be described as still in the tadpole stage. There were plenty of signs of wealth about the furnishing of the Brompton abode of mine host, but though the girls were pretty enough the dresses of all the women were, to say the least of it, "flamboyant." It was unusual for me at that time to go anywhere without meeting someone I knew, at least by sight, but here I encountered none but strange faces, until to my delight I caught sight of the great form of Corney Grain, holding up a wall in an adjoining drawing-room. Making my way slowly through the crowd to him, I was greeted with: "By Jove! Hallé, I'm glad to see you! I'm in the devil of a mess!" "Got into the wrong house?" I asked. "No! that's the trouble; I'm here on the usual twenty-five pound touch to entertain the mob! And just look at it! I thought, from the name of the family, it would be a solid British gathering, and I have brought a parody of 'Patience' with me!" "Can't you switch on to something else?" "No time to think anything out. The old boy is beckoning to me already," groaned Corney. "Well," I said, "this is 'Passionate Brompton' all dressed up to the part, and they'll take it as a compliment!" And they did!

To talk more seriously for a minute, I was receiving, at this time, initiation into the dangers to life and limb involved in man's struggles with Nature. The construction of the Albert Dock took four years, and in spite of every precaution, and the up-to-date

methods pursued, was marked by some sixteen fatal accidents, many more injuries, and several incapacitations through ill health, occasioned by the conditions of work, I myself being one of the sufferers by the last. Several of the deaths were due to the men's own carelessness. In fact one of the foremen said in despair, after a particularly bad accident: "How are we to keep the beggars from killing themselves?"

I have reason to remember this case, as the relatives of one of the men who was killed suggested to the coroner, at the inquest, that he should commit me to trial for murder! The accident came about as follows: a rough contractor's line ran down each dock wall, to dump the soil excavated outside, to form the embankment for the goods sheds, etc. The drivers of these trains were expressly forbidden to let the navvies ride on the empty trucks before and after work, on account of the danger of such rickety contraptions. One day, despite being warned off, some 50 to 100 men swarmed on the trucks and threatened to dump the driver into the Thames if he didn't run them down. He started, and the whole train of trucks with the engine and tender went off the line and over the side of the bank, in one jumble of smashed trucks and smashed men, broken rails, escaped steam, and so on. Foremen, gangers, everyone rushed to the scene to pull the wreckage apart and take the dead and injured out. There were several killed, one with his head terribly crushed, and I confess the sights made me feel utterly ill and sick and I had to be given a strong drink of brandy before I could pull myself together. I did not feel particularly cheerful either, when at the inquest next day a

thin, nervous-looking man rose up and, pointing to me as I sat next to the coroner, demanded I should be committed to trial for murder! "I am not," he exclaimed, "going to allow my relatives to be slaughtered by incompetent young engineers!"

The coroner, a shrewd-looking, elderly person, signed to me to keep quiet, and turning to the indignant one, asked sharply, "What relation are you to the dead man?" "Brother-in-law," said he. "And what do you expect to make by this?" was the next query. "Well!" said my accuser, grumblingly, "I think the least the firm can do is to pay the poor chap's funeral expenses." At which anticlimax to his heroics the coroner ordered him to sit down, and addressing the jury told them the facts and instructed them to bring in a verdict of accidental death, contributed to by the men's own negligence.

A similar case of negligence occurred when a bricklayer, weighing some fifteen stone, leaned his back against a temporary rail fence on a platform, 50 feet above the half-finished walls of a tunnel between the two docks. Not only were there notice-boards dotted all along this platform warning people not to go too near its edge, but the unfortunate man had chosen a joint in the 3-inch scantling to lean against. Naturally it opened out and let him down.

To spend the evening of a day such as this at a reception at the Marchioness of Ripon's, or at a ball at the Countess of Crawford's, Grosvenor Square, was certainly to have a glimpse at the two ends of the social scale.

I remember once being an involuntary "gate-

crasher." I had been invited to a dance at a house in Berkeley Square, and on my hansom pulling up at one with an awning up and red cloth down, had got out, entered, disposed of hat and coat, and gone upstairs. Dancing was in full swing, but the familiar throng I expected were conspicuous by their absence. After moving through the rooms I struck a man I knew fairly well and asked him where all the —— were. It seemed strange they shouldn't be at their own dance! He looked at me rather peculiarly and retorted: "Why, you silly ass, this isn't the ——s'. This is Lady ——'s. The ——s' dance is next door!" "The devil it is," I exclaimed; "I'd better do a bit of apologising." "Well, there's Sir ——." I went up to my involuntary host and explained I had not noticed there were two dances on, side by side, and if he would let me make my excuses to his wife I would remove myself next door. He said: "Not a bit of it. There's plenty of time for you to go on to the ——s', and my girls will see you get all the dances you want."

I remember preventing no less a personage than Robert Browning from "crashing" into the proceedings of a distinguished gathering in a very different sense. Judge Pollock's numerous and able family were enthusiastic amateur actors, and gave frequent performances at their father's house, to brilliant assemblages. Hallam Tennyson, the son of the poet and later on Australian Governor-General, was one of their leading actors. Incidentally, he quite lost his stammering stutter, once he faced the footlights. On the occasion I am dealing with I had arrived late, and made my way as quietly as possible to two back rows

of seats in the half-darkened auditorium of the little private theatre. I found myself next to a stout party, who was breathing heavily and in evident danger of letting off a portentous snore. Looking at him more closely, I recognised him as Browning, and as he had long been a friend of ours, ventured to dig him gently but firmly in the ribs. This roused him, without the preliminary snort I had feared as the effect of my ministration, and he gazed round half-dazed, and recognising me, murmured, "Gus, my boy! Where are we?" I muttered back, "At one of the Pollock plays! You were just going to snore! I *had* to wake you! Hope you don't mind?" "Mind?" he whispered, shocked. "Thank God you did! If it had got about that Browning had snored in the middle of a play at the Pollocks', I'd never have got over it." And in his known susceptibility over his social reputation, he was evidently genuinely perturbed. "That's all right then!" I murmured cheerfully; "but what made you so drowsy?" "My dear boy!" he murmured back. "I've just come from dining with six old women! Three bishops and their wives, and it was dreadful!" "Where was it?" I asked. "It was at Lady . . . Lady . . . Do you know, Gus, I dine out so much that I have really forgotten where I have dined to-night!" I looked at him with a mild grin. "A bit thick, isn't it?" I queried with a hint of sarcasm; "you can't have got away before ten-thirty, and it's only just after eleven!" "Well! Don't put that about either!" he said coaxingly. "Forget it! Forget it!"

About the time when Gladstone was working the

Midlothian Campaign for all it was worth, and the Conservatives were beginning to grow uneasy as to its possible results, I was dining one night at Spedding's, the great authority on Bacon, and the company, which included Lecky, the historian, was apparently composed almost, if not entirely, of Liberals. All present were firmly convinced that the coming General Election would mean a colossal landslide to the Liberal side of the House. They seemed equally certain that Gladstone would be quite impossible as a Premier any longer, and the conversation turned principally on the merits and demerits of the three or four men suggested as possible successors to the G.O.M. One of the guests remarked dryly that they need not be in such a hurry; the elections were not on yet, much less over, and it was no good dividing the bear's skin before it was slain. Here Lecky put in his oar. "On the contrary," he said with customary slowness of utterance, "I would advise you to have all your plans cut and dried in good time. My reading of history has taught me that in a democratic country such as this, especially after a widening of the franchise, such as we have had lately, the tendency is strongly in favour of the existing Government being thrown out. The people like to show their power. In this case, the Disraeli Government has had the worst of bad luck since winning its 'Peace with Honour' rubber, and an electorate is notoriously of short memory. A Liberal victory seems practically assured. As to its Premier, you people of the 'Intelligentsia' may have your own ideas—you seem to have too many—as to the impossibility of Gladstone and the superior advantages of this,

that and the other person. To the general Liberal public, however, Gladstone is the Liberal Party personified, and I expect he will simply be swept to power over your heads ! ” The fact was that the sane-minded among the Liberals of the day looked dubiously on Gladstone's Midlothian Campaign. They regarded his slogan, “the Bulgarian atrocities,” as much the same kind of “terminological inexactitude” as Winston Churchill was forced to confess the cry of “Chinese slavery” was later, in the case of another attack on the Conservative Government of the day. It would be interesting to know what percentage of hatred of the Turk, and what percentage of hatred of Benjamin Disraeli, went to make up Gladstone's love of the unholy Bulgarian, who, after all, always went fifty-fifty with the Turk in the atrocity business.

The key to Gladstone's character is, after all, contained in his note to Lord Palmerston, while holding a relatively small post in the latter's Government. “I hold such strong opinions on the iniquity of Great Britain's continuing to hold Gibraltar that I shall reluctantly be compelled to resign the position I hold, unless your Cabinet resolves on an early return of that fortress to Spain.” He received the following dry reply from that humorous and astute Premier : “Lord Palmerston would be sorry to lose the services of Mr. W. E. Gladstone, but he would be still more sorry to lose Gibraltar.”

An occasion when he was hoist by his own petard, and an equally inconsequential British public, was the evening on which the news of the death of General Gordon at Khartoum reached London. Gladstone

had taken a box at a theatre, and was recognised by the audience, on taking his seat in it. Utterly scandalised at this callous indifference to the fact that public opinion held him responsible for this tragedy, the whole house rose as one man and booed and hissed and hooted till he and his party hastily fled the scene. Having thus vindicated the cause and claims of propriety, this virtuous-minded audience sat down to enjoy the musical comedy provided for its delectation !

I have often wondered which of the two poets, Browning and Tennyson, took the palm for the imagery of the couple of lines into which each condensed his philosophy of music. In that wonderful work "Paracelsus," Browning represents Paracelsus as suffering an agony of thought, and calling on his friend Festus to soothe him by some simple song. Festus sings that charming little piece, "Where the Maine glideth, there my love abideth," and Paracelsus declares, with relief, that the notes have moved his heart :

" Its darkness passes
Like some black snake that force will not expel
Which glideth forth to music sweet and low ! "

Tennyson's lines are well known, but I have a curious feeling that I was present at their birth. The occasion may, in fact, quite possibly have been the following :

The fame of Little Holland House, as a rendezvous on summer Sunday afternoons of all who were great in art or literature and in London at the time, is world-wide. The house, occupied at the time I speak of by Watts, the painter, with Mrs. Prinsep, the wife of old

Thoby Prinsep, the last of the East India directors, as hostess, was a low, rambling bungalow, of great age and charm, in the midst of wide lawns noted for their glorious cedar trees and lovely rose gardens. Here on the lawns the distinguished crowd partook of strawberries and cream, while their merry children were delighting in swings hung from the great trees. Later on, when the young folk had been sent home, there would be music by the greatest exponents of the day in the drawing-room, the guests sitting on the veranda or lawn, or strolling in the grounds, listening to the strains floating out through the open windows. Alfred Tennyson was a frequent attendant at these gatherings, but kept aloof from their gaiety.

On one occasion, when Hallé, Joachim and Piatti were playing a trio, a girl I knew suggested we should go and listen from the near rose garden, then in the height of its bloom. We strolled along, and presently, in the gloaming, became aware of Tennyson, in his usual great heavy cape, his large soft hat on his long hair—apparently day-dreaming, on the garden seat among the roses, with his pipe in his mouth. We halted, not to disturb him, and at that moment there came stealing through the evening air and heavy fragrance of the roses the dying strains of the trio, so soft as to be barely audible, but unutterably tender and touching.

I wonder if it were not here and now that he received the inspiration of his lovely lines :

“ Music that softer falls
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes,
Or petals of blown roses on the grass.”

Petals were dropping around him, and the fall of the music on the ear could not have been quieter or softer.

One day I had a proof of the truth of Lady Carberry's saying that "Leisure is empty time"—with the accent on "empty." When frost had stopped our work at the Dock and I had turned in at my club for a drink at 11 a.m. I found a young chum in the smoking-room with a glass and a smoke, and half asleep. "Hello, Hallé," quoth he, "have you joined the noble army of 'nothing-to-dos'?"—he himself had £15,000 a year. "No such luck!" I retorted, and explained why I was off work for that day. "Luck, you call it!" he snorted. "If you only knew what I'd give to have something to kill time with, regularly!" "Well," I said, "if you with your little bit of splosh can't find enough to do!"—I ordered a spot of whisky, and went on: "hunting, yachting, polo, shooting, Monte Carlo, sport—all the fun of the fair——" But he stopped me. "If you only knew how it all bores you, when it has to be done, in turn, to keep oneself alive! And London's the worst!" He fairly groaned. "You can't stop in bed till lunch, and you get to hate the sight of princes and Hurlingham and the same old crowd in the afternoon, and you can't go to the theatre every night." "There are such things as dances," I suggested. "Yes!" he snarled, "and if you dance twice with the same girl, up comes Mamma, smirking!" I began to think that Byron was right when he said that "Society consisted of bores and the bored"; and as I felt like one of the latter, I left this specimen of the former.

Shortly after the opening of the "Grosvenor Gallery," the art creation of Sir Coutts Lindsay and my brother C. E. Hallé, I was showing a French brother-in-law of mine round, at one of Lady Lindsay's Sunday afternoon receptions, when we found ourselves close to Field-Marshal Lord Strathnairn. My brother-in-law no sooner recognised him than he said in an audible whisper, "Ah, ce Lord Strathnairn ! Il me fait peur !" The ancient hero heard him, and slowly turning his head, and drawing his fingers through his long, sandy side-whiskers, favoured us with a grim, malicious smile that seemed to express satisfaction at this appreciation of his quality. Finding my relative really knew very little about the old warrior, I told him I would make his hair curl with the hero's story. This, I expounded in a quiet corner, was that Lord Strathnairn, then General Sir Hugh Rose, after having distinguished himself greatly during the suppression of the Mutiny, was placed in command of a large force afterwards known as the "army of retribution," and sent along and across the area of its late lurid orgies to stamp out the last glowing embers of its fires. This he did so thoroughly, cleanly and mercilessly, that altars were set up to him by the remnants of the cowed people he had dealt with, as "the god of vengeance !"

Anyone more unlike the character could not be conceived. Slight of build, effeminate of speech and dandified in dress and manners, Sir Hugh Rose was the founder of what was known as "the kid-glove school of fighting." The following may serve as a sample of his methods : after rooting out and exter-

minating a notorious nest of rebels and destroying the place, lock, stock and barrel, he would send his orderly for an officer next morning at daybreak and address him in his customary languid and lisping drawl. "Ah, Major,"—or Captain, as the case might be—"so sorry to worry you at this unconscionable hour, but would you kindly have these thirty-two men blown from the guns, and I should be so pleased if you would breakfast with me here afterwards. Thanks, so much!" The special finesse of blowing an Indian from the guns is that their religions generally hold that if their bodies, living or dead, are in any way mutilated or dismembered, the injury is eternal. When blown from the guns, it would be difficult to gather enough fragments to make one decent limb.

It was an ironic end to a striking career that Lord Strathnairn spent his old age in writing five-act tragedies in blank verse, which, however, never saw daylight. He seemed to lack the needful dramatic touch!

I was soon to be brought up, personally, and roughly, by the fact that, as Shakespeare puts it, "there is a destiny doth shape our ends, rough hew them as we may!" Not that I had hewn at mine particularly roughly. I was, all through, dead set on a writing career, that of a poet in fact, and by now had written a prodigious mass of all manner of verse. I had been encouraged by the fact that my family had searched through Shakespeare's sonnets for three days, in the hope of proving to me that one of mine was really William's! It was not, but that did not prevent its being thrown in a drawer and my being told that as I

was one of four sons in a family of nine, I absolutely must stick to engineering, and have a try at money-making. All the Dad's influence was needed to help on my eldest brother, the painter, and get the rest of the family settled. As a concession, my stuff was sent to Robert Browning by his kind consent, and I received a long letter from him, saying that I had "poetical gifts of a high order," but hinting that my experiences of life had hardly been such, so far, as bred the kind of poetry I aimed at. This, and the fact that, though the influence of an influential family can do much for one when solidly behind his efforts, it is simply crushing when dead against such efforts, decided me to climb down. I wrote a final screed of self-encouragement in my surrender to fate, and determined to face life seriously and await the outcome. I candidly hated my work at the Docks and grimly looked forward to a full chance of testing my new resolutions, as I had heard that, as soon as the Albert Dock was finished, as expected in a few months' time, a start was to be made with a still larger one, on the Marshes just ahead; a further four years' job for the lot of us!

CHAPTER VI

SOUTH AFRICA IN THE 'EIGHTIES

HARDLY had I given in to my family's opposition, abandoned my hope of a literary career, and settled down to my rough engineering work at the Docks, than a friendly series of freezing yellow fogs began, in November 1879, to play havoc with the health of the engineers and men employed there. Hæmorrhage of the lungs was my portion, and hurrying up to London to my father's old friend, Sir William Jenner, the first day of its appearance, I was ordered a year at sea ; the voyage to start in a week, if I wished to live half that ! And so it came about ! A week's scurried settlement of my affairs found me on board a Union liner, bound for the Cape, with a full kit and £100 in my pocket to see me farther. I soon found out the truth of Seneca's dictum, " No evil is without its compensation ! "

I will merely recount one incident of my voyage to the Cape, as it is illustrative of an order of old sea-dog that was, even in 1879, already passing.

We were a jovial company in the first class ; the journey took over three weeks at that time. We were talking of spiritualism one evening, and as I had mastered the art of table-turning, a number of us had a shot at it. A round table was obtained, and we sat down to it in the saloon, little fingers touching. We

had just persuaded the thing to get up on its legs on one side, when the Skipper, Captain Coxwell, Commodore of the Union Fleet, passed through. Halting at our little group, he asked what on earth we were playing at? I answered, "Trying our hands at table-turning, Captain! Sit down and join in." We were rather taken aback when he grew purple in the face and thundered out: "Stop it at once! I'll have no devil's work aboard my ship! Quartermaster, take this table away!" And we had to clear off, like a parcel of whipped school-boys and -girls!

By the time we reached Cape Town I had heard so much about the excellence of the climate of the Free State, and the superiority of a sojourn there, over any voyage by sailing-ship anywhere, that I joined forces with an English iron manufacturer, in an advanced stage of consumption, and his wife on their way to Bloemfontein. We went by steamer to Port Elizabeth, and I enjoyed the primitive nature of the hotels at both ports, and the primitive method of being landed at the latter, via bucket to tug and thence to landing-stage, as a novel experience. Otherwise, both places seemed moderately civilised.

Among the letters of introduction I had brought with me was one to a retired Cape merchant, who had built himself a fine and large country house, near Wynberg, with vast grounds laid out by an imported landscape gardener; the furniture both costly and in good taste. The only fly in the ointment, but that a grievous one, was that no sooner had this enchanting place of retirement been furnished than the doctors announced that the wife, to prolong her life any

number of years, must live at Davos, in Switzerland. The owner showed me his pictures with great pride. I was astounded to find among them what appeared to be replicas of world-famous masterpieces, then, to my certain knowledge, adorning the walls of Europe's greatest galleries. When it came, however, to staring at the "Madonna di San Sisto," I suppose I must have looked particularly bluffed, because its owner said meditatively, "Yes! that copy must have cost me £——," naming a good round sum. The possibility of a man of such wealth adorning his walls with copies, instead of good, if more modest, originals, had never struck me. I began to understand where the market for all the copies constantly being made in the great galleries existed.

From Port Elizabeth we went, by train, to Graaff-Reinet, then rail-head, and from there, by a six-horse wagonette, to Bloemfontein. The thermometer at Graaff-Reinet—it was Xmas Day—stood at 123° in the shade, and we were shown high fences of corrugated iron which had been riddled by hail, as by a machine gun, only a few days before. There was a drought over most of the country, and the veld on both sides of the road up to and in the Free State was littered with dead oxen. We passed a few wagons, the poor beasts pulling them, mere skeletons. Nevertheless, the vast, silent spread of veld and sky struck me as most impressive.

We were to have a taste of the vagaries of South African weather before we reached Bloemfontein. It was well on in the afternoon, when I noticed the driver and his assistant in excited talk, accompanied by

anxious looks around. Suddenly they turned the horses on to the veld and lashed them into a furious gallop. "Heh! what are you doing?" shouted my male companion, as we were all three thrown from side to side of our conveyance. "Look out for the hail, master," shouted the driver, "let down the flap over the door! We make for farm, there, in front!" And almost before he had finished speaking, hail came thundering down on us from a black cloud I had watched hurrying up, which, being almost dead behind, had escaped the notice of the driver. The roar of the hail on the roof and side of the wagonette and on the veld was simply stupendous. Luckily, it did not last long, and a blue sky succeeded with a particularly chilly air. "Look, master!" called out the driver, pointing round with his whip. We looked! The whole of the veld as far as we could see was glistening white, where ten minutes before it had been as brown as a berry. The vehicle crunched through the icy particles as we flew towards a long, low, comfortable-looking bungalow, a mile or so ahead. "But we can't go there, without being asked, or knowing the people," protested my friend. "Oh! ho!" laughed the driver. "You in South Africa, now, master! Anyone go any house when weather bad!" and he trotted us up pretty speedily to the fine old homestead, the large garden and trees of which bore evidence of the fury of the squall. The door was opened by a Hottentot servant, but a grizzled old chap, looking like a comfortable gentleman farmer, was in the hall and welcomed us in warmly out of the storm. He had seen us coming and had rooms ready

for us if we were wet and wished to change. Dinner would be ready in half an hour !

We stayed the night there, and found the old fellow most entertaining. He was English born and had farmed in Cape Colony till the Great Trek, when he had come up with many other English, attracted by the stories of the boundless veld, teeming with game and bare of natives. It had been a hard fight to get things going, and he and his family had spent night after night on the flat roof of the house, with guns and ammunition and food, during the Basuto War of 1868, and seen farms burning in the distance. Money, too, had been scarce, and when he and his wife wanted to go to Bloemfontein for clothes and supplies, they sent boys in with a flock of sheep, and followed next day in their Cape-cart, and bartered the sheep at 10s. each against their purchases. He had done well since the diamond fields had started in Kimberley, but the diggers were cutting down all the timber right up to Bechuanaland, and the Kalihari Desert was spreading. The grass even on his farm was growing thin, and—as he showed us next day—much of it was reduced to tufts, which could be pulled up by the hand, where there had been one sheet of grass when he first came.

We had dinner in a large, well-furnished room, with some quaintly carved ebony chairs in it. These he had bought in Cape Town from officers on short leave from India, long leave alone enabling them to go as far as England.

The settler had excused his wife on the plea of ill health ; and as we had noticed sounds of disturbance in a part of the house distant from our rooms, my friend

and I thought it only right next day, before leaving, to enquire after her and regret that our unexpected arrival had disturbed the household. "Oh!" said the cheery old boy, "it wasn't your arrival that disturbed us! It was the arrival of my twenty-third!" He had been married twice, it seemed, his first family numbering twelve and his second eleven, so far! A condition of things which, I found later, was more the rule than the exception, both in the Free State and the Transvaal up to, at least, the time of the second Boer War.

We were agreeably surprised to find Bloemfontein, on our arrival at the beginning of 1880, as civilised as either Cape Town or Port Elizabeth: good streets, fine shops, an imposing set of Government buildings, two Cathedrals and a Dutch Reformed Church, with Court-house and Fort to match. The old farmer with whom we had taken refuge had given us a letter to a son-in-law whose place was an hour's drive from Bloemfontein, to ask if he could take us in for a few months. We speedily got into communication with this person, and arranged with him to take the three of us, with unlimited milk and firewood, the use of horses to ride, and free shooting, for the absurdly low price of £10 per month for the lot; we were to bring our own cook and conveyance, but to have the use of kitchen and stabling. My friend, the iron manufacturer, bought a Cape-cart and pair of horses, and was fortunate enough to come across a Cape-boy and his wife, the man an excellent driver, the woman a very fair cook, and by the end of January we were fairly established in our new home. I had bought

a double-barrel breech-loader in Bloemfontein, and as the farm simply swarmed with game, we lived on pheasants, partridges, guinea-fowl, wild duck, wood pigeons and the smaller kind of buck.

My sojourn on this farm had practically restored me to health by the end of the year, though the doctors warned me that it would not be safe to return to England under two years. I had therefore to look around for work at which to earn a living. I went to Kimberley, already an established mining centre, but was told by a reliable medico that the local dust would damage my shaky lungs more than London's fogs.

I was disappointed, as the great pit, its curious working methods and the mixed population of the town itself intrigued me vastly. At the club I learnt a good deal of the inner mysteries of the industry, and the coming fight for its control; and now that it has come to the closing down of De Beers, if only temporarily, it is interesting to look back on the dispute between the Rhodes and the Barnato policies. Rhodes was all for restricting output, to keep the price of diamonds up. Barnato insisted that, where value existed underground, it should be dug out as quickly as possible. So long as he made his 100 to 150 per cent. profit on working costs, he didn't care a hang if diamonds went down to 2s. 6d. a carat, and were worn by housemaids. Rhodes won, Barnato became a director of De Beers and a member of the Cape Parliament, etc., and many of his supporters were ruined. However all this may be, it is a curious thought that the Kimberley diamonds, and the Premier and Jagersfontein ones as well, might have been

cleaned up before Namaqualand's treasures were even heard of if Barnato had won the day.

I returned to Bloemfontein, disgruntled, to be told by friends that the Free State Government had decided to build five bridges and a number of other things, and that if I had a decent diploma and knew anything of bridge-building, it would be worth while trying for the job, as I was on the spot. True enough, I had studied bridge-building and spent a year at a bridge-building works, so I sent in my diploma and certificates, and much to my surprise was appointed Government engineer, with a fair salary and permission to do private work as well.

During the next five years I designed and put out to contract three steel bridges, of respectively 4 spans of 150 feet, with 80-foot piers, 2 spans of 100 feet, with a 60-foot pier, and 1 span of 100 feet; also two stone bridges, the one of 75-foot span, and the other of 3 spans of 33 feet each. Meanwhile, I designed and put out to contract some 400 other works, including gaols, schools, *landdrost's* offices, etc., a lunatic asylum, barracks, museums, etc., called for designs for and superintended the erection of a new presidency, and made railway and irrigation surveys, besides advising Harrismith on its water supply.

I came across some curious indications of the mentality of the Dutch Free Stater of the period. For instance, when about to start on my railway survey to Kimberley, I heard that my driver-cook and general factotum had been arrested the night before for a murderous attack on his wife, when drunk. As my expedition was a fairly large one—myself, an

assistant, the aforesaid factotum and four boys, with a six-horse wagonette and two riding horses, instruments, etc., I went off at 6 a.m. and woke up the *landdrost*, to say I was pressed for time, and as this was a Government job, I must have my driver, even if he had killed as many wives as Henry VIII. He actually gave me a chit to the head gaoler to let me have the culprit, on his promise to return to prison at the end of the job! He duly came along with us, behaved splendidly, as driver, cook and general bossier-up, and went back to gaol when we got back to Bloemfontein, to get off scot-free, his wife having recovered. "Lord bless you, boss!" he said to me, "it takes more than a blow on the head with a kitchen chopper to kill a Basuto woman like my wife!" He himself was the 6-foot 2-inch son of a Scotch colonel by an Indian slave woman.

A more important matter was the refusal of the Volksraad to allow me to dynamite the drifts for ten miles on each side of my bridges when completed. I warned the President that no Boer would pay toll to cross a bridge when he could go through a drift for nothing, even six miles away, and that for eleven months in the year there would be no elaborate fees, paid down to cover the cost of these five bridges. As a result, the toll-keeper of my biggest bridge, which cost about £40,000, started a tea-shop and general store for the transport-riders and others who used the old drift half a mile away. The river was 60 feet deep during the flood months, and only had a couple of feet or so of water in it for the rest of the year. But I have seen ten to twenty wagons held up at the drift,

when in quarter flood, and dragged through by three teams of oxen at a time, the first swimming, and all the loose things on the wagon adrift, sooner than pay toll !

The Transvaal " Republic " in the days of President Pretorius was, as usual, on the rocks, and Koos Mentjies, the Treasurer, was sent round the Potchefstroom merchants to ask advice how to raise the wind. They suggested a tax of 3*d.* per pound on gunpowder. It could be levied on them and they would protect themselves. Mentjies thanked them and went away. He came back the next week and told them the Raad had taken their advice, but he did not think they would be exactly happy over it ! There was to be a tax of 3*d.* per pound on gunpowder, but the price of gunpowder was not to be raised ! There is a charmingly bland simplicity about this kind of high finance that was hardly beaten by the Cape Government's instructions that the Cape Mounted Police were to take any natives they caught sheep stealing down to the nearest port, by train or otherwise, for trial, but were not to charge their expenses ! Consequently if a C.M.P. man saw a native skinning a sheep the other side of a hedge, he would remain on his horse for a chat with the delinquent. It took years to get this sorry regulation altered.

A more sardonic interest attaches to the fact that when my survey of a railway line from Bloemfontein to Kimberley was completed, and President Brand pointed out to the Raad that, if the line were built then—the early 'eighties—they would still get the £90,000 Great Britain was willing to pay as compen-

sation to the Free State for losing the Kimberley diamond fields, one influential member, a lawyer with a large Boer practice, fought the proposal tooth and nail. "If they built this line," he thundered out, "the French [*sic* !] would come in and take the country."

A certain section of the Boer intelligentsia were adepts at this game of bamboozling their weaker brethren. A young Free Stater had gone to Europe to study for the Law, and had come through with such distinction that when he returned to Bloemfontein our little Literary Society, the one local institution which kept the flame of culture alight in our midst, gave a special meeting in his honour. The room, to our surprise, was more than half full of Boers. We were soon to learn why! When our Chairman, Judge de Villiers, had duly complimented the hero of the evening, that young man rose, and after saying he felt specially proud of having shown that a young South African could hold his own against the young men of Europe—a boast which met with general applause—he went on, that while overseas he had made a particular study of the railway question, and all he could say to his fellow-Boers was, "Stick to your ox-wagon!" This astounding piece of advice was received with a storm of cheers from the crowded rows of farmers, if with loud protests from the members of the Society, and the meeting broke up in disorder, this apology for a statesman being borne off in triumph by his friends for drinks. Meeting him the next day, I asked him how he, a man of education, could talk such mischievous piffle? and he told me, quite coolly, that as his chances of practice as a lawyer

lay among the Boers, he had to give them the stuff they wanted! He has since become a judge.

The Principal of the Girls' High School, Bloemfontein, sent in a requisition for a grand piano; the present old upright cottage ditto was no longer suitable. It was granted, but against a strong protest from a venerable old member, who insisted that there was no need for a piano at all! A harmonium to which the girls could sing hymns was all they should be given. "Women," he concluded, "are a haughty race, and require to be kept down!"

A friendly Irish doctor, named Croghan, once drove me out to a farm a little distance from Bloemfontein, to see a family of patients the like of which, he said, could be found nowhere outside South Africa. "What's the great idea, Croghan?" I asked on the way out. "Sure, an' I wouldn't be after spoiling your first impression!" he replied. Well, after a wild Irish drive, in which I thought each jolt would be my last impression, we left the road and drove over the veld down an excuse for a pathway to a small neglected-looking homestead, of apparently three rooms and a kitchen. As we drew near, I heard an appalling uproar of shrieks and yells and curses, a babel of sounds. "Good God!" I exclaimed, "is that a lunatic asylum?" "Not far off," returned Croghan grimly, whipping up his smart little Basuto ponies. "Come in, Hallé," he said as we reached the door, "and don't pretend to see anything out of the way." Pretend, indeed! There was a huge untidy Boer woman in an arm-chair on one side, gazing vacantly into space, deaf to the turmoil around her. A tall

man, in what had once been a civilised suit, was sitting at a bare table, with a Bible on it, looking the picture of dejection ; a draggle-tailed slip of a young girl with a baby in her arms, and the most restless glare in her eyes, was screaming at the top of her voice, in the apparent belief that she was singing her yelling baby to sleep. An emaciated boy was mouching round the room, touching the torn and dirty wall-paper at each step in a quite aimless way, and trying to outscreech his sister, and all the time maniacal shrieks and curses were to be heard from a man in an inside room, evidently struggling in a fury with one or two others, whose rapid speech with one another in Kaffir occasionally rose above the tumult.

The man in the front room rose as we entered, and shook hands listlessly. "Is it arranged, Doctor?" he asked tonelessly. "Yes," replied Croghan, "they will be here this afternoon for him. Has he been quiet?" "He broke loose last night and nearly killed the Hottentot! It took three of them to tie him up again! I shall be glad when he is gone!" At this the old woman broke into a protesting torrent of Dutch, which her husband vainly tried to stem. Croghan paid no attention, but opened the door to the inner room, looked in and beckoned to me. I saw a powerful young man, lying bound on the floor, struggling and foaming at the mouth, while an old grizzled Hottentot, with a bad wound on his head, was helping a native to tie more ropes round his arms and legs. The old Hottentot was plainly practising his own ju-jitsu on the struggler. "Good man, that," murmured Croghan approvingly.

“What does it all mean? Good God!” I muttered. “Intermarriage of first cousins since the year one, with a bit of ‘poor white’ business thrown in,” replied the doctor; “but go in and talk to the father of this lovely lot. I’ve got to give this chap something to quiet him.”

I saw Croghan inject something into the arm of the raving one on the floor, and turned back to the dispirited parent. He had certain signs of education and breeding about him, and as he looked round at his dilapidated room and sorry family, he said with a sigh: “You would not think I had been a Resident Justice of the Peace a few years ago. The hand of God has been heavy on me: dismissed the service; a pension on which a dog would starve; given a farm by my father—know as much about farming as law; my wife melancholy mad; my eldest son the father of his sister’s child”—he pointed to the shrieking girl with the screaming baby—“and they are to be taken to Bloemfontein by the police, all three! Well! it is God’s will! My only comfort is my youngest! He reads the Bible already. Jan, Kom hier so!” He called the boy I had noticed mouching about. He came to his father, a lad of about twelve, dressed in a pitiful travesty of a “little Lord Fauntleroy” suit, filthily stained, torn and dirty. His eyes were vacant, and his poor half-starved face that of a half-wit. However, the father gave him the old Bible, which seemed to have half its pages missing, and he began to call out some meaningless sounds, neither English nor Afrikaans, in a shrill voice. “He promises well, my Jan!” murmured the father, looking at him with a

pride that seemed nauseating, but which made the lad look up at me for further applause. However, at that moment the mother raised her huge bulk from her chair and hurled herself into the inner room, shouting, "Wat mak je mit mi Koos?" The sudden cessation of noise from it had reached to her dulled brain, and Croghan and the men were evidently having as much trouble with her as they must have had previously with "Koos."

My attention had been temporarily distracted from Jan, but a howl of frenzied rage recalled it to him. He had flung himself on the floor screaming with anger, and was tearing the Bible to pieces with his teeth, worrying it like a dog. The father picked him up and called to me, with a venomous glare, "You have hurt him with your indifference. He is very sensitive!" Sensitive! That?

However, at that moment Croghan came out, pursued by a vituperative fat Mænad, and said, "Jump in, Hallé! We can do no more good here! It's the *landdrost's* job now!" We shook hands hastily with the still indignant father, hurried to the doctor's Cape-cart and drove off, pursued by the insensate screaming of the girl and her baby, that had continued all through and was now augmented by the yells of my "little Lord Fauntleroy" and the raging of the infuriated mother.

"Are there many such families?" I asked Croghan on the way back. "There are that!" he snapped back; "and worse! This inbreeding is complicating the 'poor white' business, and that's bad enough."

CHAPTER VII

LIFE IN THE FREE STATE

I HAVE no intention of dealing with either the cause or the course of the first Boer War. I was too late an arrival in South Africa to understand its under-currents. The population of Bloemfontein was half Dutch, half English, and each section refrained scrupulously, so far as I could gather, from discussing the war with the other. This was almost comically exemplified when the news of Majuba came through. A club had recently been started, with a bar in the colonial fashion, and it was decidedly interesting to note on the evening of the great news how one end of this bar was occupied by Dutch members, drinking champagne, and talking softly together, while the English members foregathered at the other end, solacing themselves with whiskies, brandies and gin, diluted with the qualifying soda. A leading Dutchman would occasionally leave his friends, come over to us and talk affably about the weather. The one sign I came across of the bitterness engendered among the British was at Harrismith, later on, when some Scotchmen told me of their feelings on watching several loads of their soldiers' kilts, retrieved after Majuba, sold on the market-square as suitable dresses for young Boer girls.

I feel constrained to tell of several indications of

implacable racialism on the Boer side, because Colonel Deneys Reitz, in his otherwise most interesting account of his adventures in the second Boer War, makes the extraordinary statement that racialism was "unknown in South Africa after the first Boer War till revived by the Jameson Raid"—a statement which General Smuts, in his laudatory foreword to Colonel Reitz's work, saw no reason to contradict or qualify.

I can only say that once, in these early 'eighties, when travelling in my Cape-cart to my Smithfield bridge, I was forced by an appalling storm one evening to seek refuge at a large farm, a little off the road. The owner proved to be the Volksraad member for the district, and when he discovered I was English, he flatly refused to take me in. I told him, in vain, that I was the Government engineer, travelling on State affairs, and that I demanded shelter from him as a member of the Legislature; also that I would report him to the President. He retorted that I could report him to Queen Victoria if I liked, but his house I should not enter! I had to drive on to Smithfield, and he laughed at the President when carpeted on my report.

I was now doing well, what with my Government and my private work, and had taken a fair-sized house and furnished it in London style. My dining-room, with its Liberty curtains, huge Delft punch-bowl and goblets, was lighted by thick church candles on black oak brackets round the walls. I invited the whole of the club, and the entire Volksraad and Upper Civil Service, to a card party and glass of wine and cigars, in honour of Her Majesty's birthday. Not a single

Dutch member of the club nor of the Civil Service turned up, and only one jovial member of the Volksraad, and he on the excuse that it was the birthday of one of his daughters ! However, my English friends sufficed to make the evening an unqualified success. But the matter was not to end here ! Two days later I was called before the President and Executive Council, and asked sternly by John Brand whether my invitations to the Volksraad for this party on the Queen's birthday were meant as an insult ? He added that the Raad had wished to have me up and severely reprimand me ! I replied that I was astounded to hear this suggestion of an insult. He himself had frequently and openly appealed to men of both races to drop racialism, and had spoken of the esteem in which the Queen was held by all Dutch South Africans, and I thought that a friendly meeting, such as I had proposed, would be in full accord with his public utterances. He asked me, after a pause, whether this had been my real motive. I stoutly insisted that it had, on which Mr. Steyn, the leading member of the Executive, father of ex-President Steyn, and a humorous old gentleman, gave a suppressed guffaw behind his handkerchief. President Brand frowned at him, and turning to me said that " my intentions were no doubt admirable," but " my methods were—d——ble ! I might go ! "

What is more, a patriarchal, wealthy old Boer, the Nestor of his district down south, had the windows of his farm smashed and his roof riddled with bullets by a commando of young Boers, for showing them a sovereign, asking, in the Biblical fashion, whose head

was on it, and telling them that, until they could show him a sovereign with President Brand's head on it, he would refuse to join their new Afrikander Bond. I visited the old people in their subsequent desolated loneliness.

An old Free State Boer even urged the President to start another war by 1885. Four hundred Boers, he said, had just defeated 10,000 English soldiers. England could not raise an army of more than 50,000 men, and South Africa's 10,000 Boers could shoot them all down and drive every Englishman into the sea. The State Secretary told me the old man was quite serious. What was it but Boer racialism that forced the Transvaal British into the Uitlander agitation? One can forgive Colonel Reitz, as he was only a youngster in the early 'eighties, but General Smuts is a man of another kidney. Fortunately, his later opposition to General Hertzog's two-stream policy more than atones for this strange lapse.

Of all the characters I have met in South Africa President Johannes Hendrikus Brand was the one for whom I always felt the most regard and esteem. He was a simple-minded man, but possessed of a forceful determination and broadmindedness that were admirable. We became firm friends, and he defended me, perhaps against the grain, when the Volksraad insisted that I should cease work on Sundays at the huge piers of the Commissie Drift Bridge, and I threatened to send in my resignation if interfered with. I remember that we both lost our tempers and shouted at each other, he vowing that I must, and would have to, obey the constitution of the Free State, and I declaring that the

constitution of the Institution of Civil Engineers was what I was pledged to, and I would be false to engineering requirements if I didn't get these piers above flood level before the next rain, and must work on Sundays to do it. Well, he backed me up in the end, and had a tough job with the Volksraad over it.

We had an interesting talk over his visit to London to discuss the Free State claims to the diamond fields with Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary. He told me that when he left for England he thought he had the whole story of these diamond fields at his finger-ends, but found that Lord Kimberley knew far more about them than he did! The fact was that a former native chief who owned the entire region of Griqualand West had had trouble with a neighbour stronger than he, and had asked the British Government to take him, his land and people over. The Government had refused, but had interfered and saved him from his enemy, in return for a document in which he agreed to Great Britain's taking over his territory whenever such a step seemed necessary or desirable! "The wind was taken out of my sails," concluded the President, "and I was glad to accept the offer Lord Kimberley made of £90,000 if we started a railway in the Free State within a certain time." I have explained how certain "patriotic" Free Staters fought Brand's endeavours to profit by this offer.

President Brand told me that on his first visit to Lord Kimberley's office, that statesman apologised for having to leave him for half an hour or so. He had had a sudden call to the Premier's. Meanwhile, the

President, he said, would doubtless find something to amuse and interest him in the reports from various parts of the Empire in the pigeon-holes which, tier on tier, covered the walls. He was at full liberty to examine them. Brand told me that he took advantage of the permission, with the result that when Lord Kimberley returned, he looked at him aghast and exclaimed, "But, my dear sir, there is hardly a part of the Empire that is not on the verge of rebellion!" Lord Kimberley laughed. "Hardly as bad as that, is it?" he asked. "But haven't you read the reports?" enquired the President. Lord Kimberley shrugged his shoulders and acknowledged that he had not. He explained that to have every one of these monthly reports from everywhere examined would require three times the staff he was allowed. The system followed was to leave the affairs of each part of the Empire to the Governor in charge. If he were a capable man he would generally settle any little trouble that arose, and his promotion would depend on his success in doing so. If and when any such trouble proved too big for him, he notified this by a particular formula in his next despatch, and the whole staff of the London office would be put on, to study his back reports and generally work up the whole story of the part of the Empire concerned. A policy of letting things come to a head!

That President Brand could laugh at a joke against himself the following will show. When in London he, his wife and daughter received, as their first initiation into English society, an invitation to a reception at the Admiralty. The card mentioned 9 p.m. as the hour

of the guests' arrival. Remembering that punctuality was the politeness of kings, and presidents being presumably included in the category, the Brand party arrived at the official residence of Mr. W. H. Smith, then Secretary for the Navy, "and the original of the *Pinafore* Admiral," exactly on the stroke of nine, and were puzzled to note that the servants and butler looked worried, and men were still lighting up the great reception room, in which neither hosts nor guests were visible. After a quarter of an hour, two Miss Smiths put in an appearance, and after another interval Smith himself arrived. All three were most affable, but it was a full two hours before guests began to arrive in bulk. About 1 a.m. President Brand approached his wife and said it seemed that one left when one liked without formal farewells. People now seemed different from those earlier in the evening. However, he was going to find out. He had noticed a late arrival, a tall, distinguished foreigner, going through the rooms, speaking to many people, and he proceeded to stalk him. This personage made his way to the end room, looked round, twirled his moustache, and turned out through the door. Brand saw him descend the stairs and secure his coat and hat. So he returned, collected his wife and daughter and cleared in like manner. They had been there from 9 p.m. till 1.30 a.m.! But never again!

State Secretary Blignaut stepped across the passage in the Government Buildings between his and the President's office and mine one day, with a grin on his thin but kindly old face. "Hallé," he said, "I always thought the President a devout man, but he called out

just now, 'Blignaut! Blignaut! We have to fix a date for that day of humiliation and prayer against this drought! Bring me a calendar, that we may see when the moon changes!'"

He had a struggle to get the Volksraad to approve the G.C.M.G. awarded him by Queen Victoria in recognition of his services as intervener between Great Britain and the Transvaal after Majuba, and only succeeded by telling them that after letting him take a certain Portuguese order, they could not affront Great Britain by refusing a British one. He would still call himself President Johannes Hendrikus Brand and not Sir John Brand.

Touching this, I met him a little later in the passage and said, "I suppose, President, that we must address you as Sir John, now?" "No," he replied, "President is the higher title! But"—and he gave my arm a friendly squeeze—"when you call at the Presidency, don't forget to call my wife Lady Brand!"

I learnt much about South Africa and its history from the President, and ventured to ask him, once, what he thought of the general position. "Well," he said after a pause, "I am South African born, and love my country and my people, and am as thorough a South African as exists. I am so convinced of the strength and staying power of my race that I am certain it must become, in time, the dominating factor and governing element in the country, but we are a backward people and the British are plainly the only European race through which we can secure the civilisation we require. As to these impossible racial wars, however——" and he stopped and threw

up his hands in a condemnatory gesture there was no mistaking.

This was, of course, before the discovery of gold in the Transvaal, and the inrush of British people and capital that upset his calculations. One cannot help thinking how different South African history would have been if the Transvaal President had been a Brand instead of a Kruger !

“Alles zal regt kom ! ”

Nothing annoyed Brand more than the way people distorted this historic saying of his. He told me emphatically that what he had said was, “If every man does his duty and his best, everything will come right ! ” The Free Staters, however, with their usual happy-go-lucky, not to say lazy, temperament, had conveniently dropped the qualifying first part of the statement and credited their President with the soothing, if vague, announcement that all would turn out well !

Another time when President Brand really did lose his temper was at the meeting of the two Presidents, of the Transvaal and the Free State, on an island in the Vaal River to discuss President Kruger's proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance between the two States. Brand firmly refused to agree to more than a defensive pact, and Kruger had to give in. Brand's secretary was a German named Karl Borckenhagen, of as thorough anti-British proclivities as any later believer of his native land in “Der Tag.” There were a number of documents relating to various matters, to be signed on the last day, and Brand's suspicions were roused by the fact that Borckenhagen had placed the

Treaty at the bottom of the pile, and declared, when they came to it, that there was no time or need to read it through, he had written it out exactly as instructed and they could sign it right away. Brand, however, insisted on perusing it thoroughly, and found, as he had suspected, that this over-ingenuous secretary had calmly made it out as both an offensive and defensive alliance. Brand promptly tore it up, with the copies, and his remarks on the matter tore Borckenhagen's character into complete shreds also.

It is a curious but significant fact, although the statesmen of the two Republics have always been too stubborn or obtuse to perceive its significance, that every time the British Government has taken either country in hand, and Britons have felt encouraged to go in, that country has done well and flourished. Whenever, however, the British Government, yielding to the clamour of the Boers, has withdrawn from either both have immediately done badly and have continued to slump until further orders. When the Orange Free State became the Orange River Sovereignty, Britons swarmed in, and the country prospered. When it became a Republic again business fell to pieces once more, till British capital and industry expended on Kimberley gave it a fillip for the time. The same with the Transvaal: the annexation in 1877 saved the country from the collapse with which, after several ups and downs, it was threatened, and it showed signs of recovery till it embarked on that disastrous business, the first Boer War. After this was over, depression gradually settled down on both Republics, and by 1886 the Transvaal Government was paying its officials'

salaries in rolls of tobacco grown on Government farms, and the Free State was sacking its similar unfortunates by the handful. The whole of my Public Works Department was wiped out by one Volksraad resolution, and bridges, and buildings of all sorts, were left to the tender mercies of the elements and of *landdrosts* and J.P.s as ignorant of engineering or building requirements as I have shown the members of the Volksraad to be.

My feelings towards the Free State and its people have, however, always been kindly. The smaller Boer farmer in his wattle-and-daub house of three rooms and small mealie patch, with no knowledge of literature beyond the Bible, struck me as differing from the peasant of continental Europe in no way except in his greater independence, but the upper-class farmer and the officials were indisputably well-mannered, courtly and hospitable. They were keen on education for their children, and many of them lived in a fair degree of comfort and even luxury. I knew one farmer in the eastern Free State who owned a fine two-storied stone homestead, the drawing-room of which was large enough to hold a grand piano between two of its three French windows. The governess of his two grown-up daughters was an elderly Swiss lady, a highly cultured European woman of the world, who had filled a similar position to the daughters of the ex-Khedive of Egypt. The house was run on English lines, a valet coming into my bedroom in the morning to know if I wished for a hot or cold bath. There was evidence of intensive cultivation on the farm itself, and I saw one flock of

5,000 sheep, my host explaining that his two eldest sons were off to Natal, where he had a winter farm, with a similar number. A third son was training to be a lawyer.

The townspeople, except for the Government officials, who were mostly Free Staters or from the Cape, were chiefly English, Scotch and Irish, with a scattering of Germans and Hollanders. The Boer does not take kindly to trade. The eastern towns, Harrismith and Bethlehem, were decidedly Scotch in tone; Bloemfontein cosmopolitan and cliquy. There was the official, or Government, crowd, mainly Dutch with a few Scotch and Hollanders; the Church of England set with its cathedral, bishop, canons, convent, cottage hospital, etc.; the Catholic group, also with bishop, etc., and finally, the townspeople proper. Domestic servants were Basuto or Barolong girls from mission stations, with Zulus for the stables and outdoor work. According to Boer practice, one could send one's boy up to the head-gaoler, with a mere signed chit for ten lashes, and he got them! This was hardly ever done, but the threat that it could be sufficed to keep order.

There was not much in the way of intellectual life, beyond the activities of the Literary Society already mentioned, and occasional lectures and concerts; but the town was a social one, and dances, picnics, riding and shooting parties, tennis and other sporting clubs flourished, as did also the new Bloemfontein Club, and, considering there was no railway, life was comfortable and amusing.

As to the state of morals in the country, Molière's

hero, who said he "preferred an accommodating vice to an obstinate virtue," would undoubtedly have felt at home in certain of the lower ranges of Boer farm life; but apart from occasional inevitable scandals, the better-class Boer and the people of the towns were quite up to the Victorian standard of similar classes in England, and that standard was admittedly high, till one butted up against the fast sets.

The missionary is a well-meaning person, who has done good work in South Africa. He suffers, however, from a lack of the sense of proportion, and coddles the native far too much. For instance, the Protestant Bishop of Bloemfontein had engaged an English doctor to work the cottage hospital, at a fixed salary, the use of a house near-by rent free and private practice. The medico and his wife, both refined but delicate people, duly arrived early one month and settled down. On the following Saturday the wife was called to the kitchen by her cook, and found it in the possession of half a dozen native washerwomen, who had brought a great basket of clothes, cleared the tables, put water on to boil, and announced that they always did the washing for the Cottage Hospital there. The doctor was sent for by his wife, as the women were impudent. He tried to explain that the house was now his, and the custom could not continue, intimating that they must clear out and he would see the bishop about other arrangements for them. As they grew truculent, he cleared them out brusquely, and sent a boy over to the bishop with a note, explaining that their agreement did not cover this annoyance, and he hoped the matter would be righted at once.

His Lordship came over in the afternoon with two of the ejected female natives, and to the amazement of the medico and his wife said these washerwomen had been deeply hurt at being stopped in their work, but that if the doctor and his wife would apologise to them, and promise they would not interfere again, he was sure they would bear the new-comers no grudge! He absolutely pooh-poohed the idea that Mrs. Medico could not allow her kitchen to be turned into a public laundry once a week and had not thought it necessary to mention the matter in the written agreement! He proved obdurate, and the doctor had to throw the engagement up—without compensation—take another house and start private practice only!

Another case of coddling occurred when my friend enquired for a driver for the vehicle he took out to the farm. A missionary came along with a sanctimonious-looking black, and explained that this was one of their model boys. He had said he could drive, and the reverend gentleman informed us he always believed his boys implicitly. The main point which he must insist on was that this black man must be allowed to attend school every Friday night and have Sunday free for his church duties. It was patiently explained to him that as we were going to live at a farm fifteen miles away, this was impossible. He asked if the boy could not be allowed to drive the carriage into town every Friday afternoon and out again every Monday morning? "He was such a good saintly boy!" My friend intimated that he "wanted a driver, not a saint!" and ushered the two out.

One of the chief clerics of this persuasion invited

and received a sharp snub from the *landdrost* of Bloemfontein while I was there. He stalked haughtily into the court-house while a case was on, and addressed his Worship angrily. The *landdrost* signed to the usher, and this official shouted "Stilte!" and informed his Reverence, softly but imperatively, that he must keep quiet till the case was over. The clergyman snorted, but sat down, and the magistrate asked the charge against the truculent-looking black in the dock. It seemed that he had been riotously drunk the night before on stolen whisky; had broken a policeman's head, and damaged two more who had helped to drag him to *tronk*. There was independent evidence, and the case was proved up to the hilt. *Sentence*: 10 lashes for being drunk and disorderly and assaulting the police! The *landdrost* looked enquiringly at the clergyman and said politely: "You wish to speak to me?" His Reverence had been bouncing about on his seat, and now burst out: "Do you know, sir, that that boy to whom you have given this monstrous sentence is one of my parishioners? I cannot allow you to try and to punish a boy under my jurisdiction without consulting me!" The *landdrost* was not a man to be trifled with, and now thundered out, "Your jurisdiction? Mine is the only jurisdiction that holds in Bloemfontein, and let me tell you, sir, that if you, yourself, were brought here for being drunk and disorderly and assaulting the police, I would punish you also, without the slightest regard to what you call your jurisdiction! Leave the Court, sir! Next case!"

Many a time, later, have I recalled those peaceful times at Bloemfontein and my busy days travelling

from town to town, attending to works and bridges, making surveys, varying these strenuous tasks with social pleasures, shooting, and so forth, the whole course of life seeming quite free from the danger of upheavals, racial, industrial or economic. That there were under-currents gathering force all the time I have, however, made plain by telling of the financial crisis threatening both the Transvaal and the Free State, and ending in the State stringency that caused the retrenchment, in 1887, of one-quarter of the Civil Service; a greater collapse in the Transvaal being only averted by the timely discovery of gold in Barberton and, later, on the Rand. That there was also a political, or racial, under-current, gaining strength all over South Africa, and that even the Free State was beginning to be agitated by it, was evidenced in that the Afrikaner Bond movement, started by Jan Hofmeyer at the Cape, was now having repercussions in the Free State. A Presidential election was at hand, and Chief Justice Reitz was putting himself forward in opposition to President Brand. The non-racial, conservative attitude of John Brand left Afrikanerism as the only alternative policy for a rival candidate, and Judge Reitz, announcing himself as the apostle of the new cult, was hailed rapturously by the younger Free Staters, while the older element stood staunchly by John Brand.

It was about this time that Sir George Baden-Powell, who had accompanied the Warren Expedition for the suppression of the Stellaland Freebooters, paid a visit to Bloemfontein. He was a sort of special private commissioner, and was accustomed to being sent by

the British Government to all sorts of places, from the South Seas to Hudson Bay, to report on matters that might arise, and it was to study the position in South Africa that he had been detailed to Sir Charles Warren's force, and came afterward to the Free State. I had known him and his family in England since boyhood, and had him to dinner in Bloemfontein to meet Judge Reitz, the latter accepting the invitation with alacrity, and telling me he would now find out what the Imperialists' policy with regard to South Africa really was! He proved, however, no match for a trained diplomat like Sir George, and ruefully confessed to me later that the Englishman had pumped him dry on the meaning of the Afrikander Bond movement, and not he, Sir George on Imperialism.

I wangled an invitation to dinner for Sir George and myself out of Abraham Fischer, attorney and practically leader of the Volksraad, and from what Baden-Powell learned at those two dinners, his visit to the President and anything I could tell him, combined with what he had gathered elsewhere during his stay in South Africa, he submitted a report to the British Government, later published in *The Times*, that revealed an almost uncanny grip of the situation in South Africa, and especially in the two Republics. On going back to London a couple of years later, I dined with him at the House of Commons, and was introduced to one or two members of the Cabinet. I will deal with this matter and some significant remarks made me by one of these gentlemen later on, when I come to my trip to London, but, as Sir George said to me, it was quite useless to warn the British Govern-

ment of dangers ahead. They dared not risk power by asking the electorate to enable them to take precautions!

Business connected with supplies for my bridges once called me to Thlotsi, the chief town or dorp under Chief Jonathan. I found the Basuto, on his native heath, to be a fine, manly, independent, yet thoroughly civil and obliging fellow, orderly and industrious. Even if the various chiefs and their people were rather given to scrapping among themselves, these fights generally took the form of the two opponents firing at each other across a wide valley. Jonathan struck me as an ideal native ruler, intelligent, of commanding presence and manner, and maintaining order by mildness, tempered with justice. The future of these native States will depend greatly on the course of events north of South Africa, where under 2,000,000 whites are training up many million natives to do the work which in South Africa is restricted by law and custom to the whites.

One of the most interesting figures in the Bloemfontein of the early 'eighties, as I knew it, was a Dr. Exton, a well-established medico, and a scientist of no mean reputation, either in South Africa or England. He was emphatically a gentleman of the old school; always arrayed, even on his professional jaunts in the veld, in the traditional frock-coat and stove-pipe hat, and this costume made him, on one or two occasions, the central figure of most amusing scenes. He told me, for instance, that once when bowling along a hill-side road near Basutoland, he saw a vulture's nest on the top of a moderately tall *kameel-doorn* tree, a

hundred yards or so up the hill. Giving the reins to his boy, he got down, walked to the tree, and saw he could climb it. When he reached the nest he peeped in, and found it occupied by two lively baby vultures, which shrilled defiance at him. He pulled out his large red bandanna handkerchief, overcame their resistance, tied the legs of one with one corner of his nose-rag, the legs of the second with the other, slung them, loudly protesting, round his neck, with their heads downward, and began to climb down. He reached the ground and his car all right. "But it was very unpleasant!" he told me. "They were vigorous young chicks, and kept prodding my back with their beaks, which were disagreeably sharp."

The picture of this elderly physician, with his flowing grey whiskers and in his frock-coat and tall hat, climbing down this tree in a South African wilderness, with two young vultures slung over his shoulders, tearing his coat and breeches to pieces as they hung heads down, would have made the grimmest London scientist smile.

Another time, noticing a narrow ledge running along a high cliff above the road he was travelling, he again descended, climbed up to the ledge, and went along it to see if it led, perhaps, to a cave of interest. The ledge grew at last so steep and narrow that he was forced to proceed on his hands and knees. Suddenly, on turning a bend, he came face to face with a large leopard, descending the ledge. He raised his head and, pale with dismay, silently stared at the brute, which, from a few feet distance, stared back. The tension was broken by the leopard, apparently unable

to make anything of a four-footed animal in a frock-coat and topper, with grey whiskers and spectacles complete, giving a howl of bewilderment, leaping at one bound over the uncanny obstruction in its path, and scurrying for its life away from it. The enterprising, if scared, physician gave the great cat sufficient time to get away, and retraced his scramble with considerably less dignity than he had entered upon it !

These incidents, however, cannot be allowed to minimise the value of Dr. Exton's contributions to science. He added several hitherto unknown varieties of fossil fish, now tabulated under his name, to the list of those known in South Africa, but his chief adventure in the line of research ended in a memorable visit to London, to lay a new find before the venerable scientist, Robert Owen.

There is a curious cliff in a valley in the eastern Free State. A stratum of hard rock projects high up over this valley, and under the layer of rock is a thick layer of fossil-bearing gravel. When it rains at all heavily, the rain-water runs down and under this rocky overhang, and brings down masses of gravel, which are then eagerly examined by scientists from far and near. I believe I am right in saying that it was in one of these masses of fallen gravel that Dr. Exton found the skeleton of a tiny animal, smaller than a mouse, yet possessing all the characteristics of an elephant, the rudiments of a trunk, the backward bend of the hind legs, and so forth. So impressed was the doctor with the value and interest of his discovery that he incontinently took it to London and obtained an interview with Robert Owen.

"I was decidedly nervous," said the good doctor, "when shown into the great savant's sanctum, and made considerably more so by his distinguished appearance and his taciturnity. He turned his chair towards me, motioned me to a seat near his table, folded his hands, and listened in silence while I 'spoke my piece.'"

"I had had a small ebony box, with a lid, prepared for my little beast, with pulp indentations under a crimson velvet cover, to hold its tiny bones. I reverently removed the silken coverlet protecting the whole show, and handed the box over to Owen. He took it, and while I was describing how and where I had found the thing, and the reasons why I had ventured to think it worth submitting to his notice, he lifted the bones, one by one, from their resting-place with a pair of forceps, and examined them through a magnifying glass fixed in one eye. My explanations and his examinations over, he closed the little box, pushed it on the table to the other side of him, rose, and held out his hand for me to shake as a sign of dismissal. All without a word on his part !

"I shook hands and made my way out. On my road back to my hotel, and for three days after, I was the most miserable man in London. Owen had evidently found that my find was nothing to make a song about, and I had simply made a fool of myself, and wasted my time and money in coming to London.

"On the fourth day, I was surprised to receive an official-looking envelope containing an invitation from Robert Owen (President) and the Council of the Royal Society to attend a meeting of the Society, as its guest,

on the evening of a date in the near future. You can imagine my stupefaction when, on arriving at the Royal Society, and being ushered into the reception room, I found myself received by Owen himself, introduced with the greatest courtesy to the venerable members of the Council, and led on to the platform of the main hall, given a seat on the right hand of the President, and presented by him to the large body of eminent people present, as 'his distinguished friend and colleague, Dr. Exton, from South Africa, who had brought over a most remarkable find, which he, their President, could pronounce one of the most valuable contributions to science for many years.'

"He then proceeded to deliver a lecture on the bones of the little beast before him.

"The evening ended by my name being tacked on to the Latin scientific name given the little mammal and also to the list of Fellows of the Society, at Owen's suggestion. My humiliation at my first reception by this great, if eccentric, scientist had been more than wiped out!"

The most striking episode in my six-year career as Government engineer of the Free State was when I was handed a batch of Kimberley I.D.B.s to provide with eighteen months' hard labour, for highway robbery and assault on the public roads of the Orange Free State.

Their story was an extraordinary one. Kimberley was only a short distance from the Free State border, and President Brand's country boasted no Illicit Diamond Act, with the ferocious punishments provided by the Cape one. In consequence, quite a respectably sized dorp, named "Tin Town," built of wood and

iron, sprang up just within the Free State boundary ; and once the Kimberley diamond thief had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Cape Frontier Guards, he was immune from arrest and interference, and could transact his business with any of the nefarious brokers living in comfort in this den of iniquity. The thing grew to such a scandal, however, that President Brand at last sent Captain Albrecht, of the Orange Free State Artillery, and a squad of men, to enquire into what was really going on in this Alsatia, and to keep order, as far as the common law of the country would allow. A rumour of this projected visit apparently decided the Kimberley I.D.B. gang to make hay while the sun still shone, and one night a number of them rode over to Tin Town, and held it up, in regular Wild West fashion. They were all armed with revolvers. Proceeding to the brilliantly lighted large drinking-saloon, where the Tin Towners spent their evenings, two of them covered those present with their guns, a third read out their names, one by one, from a note-book, together with the number and weights of the stones they were supposed to have, while others of the gang searched them, or accompanied them to their lodgings to have their goods handed over. The rascals took the plundering very quietly. They knew their despoilers had accurate information. Was not their business openly discussed in Tin Town, and had not this very gang been over constantly for business on their own behalf ? So thoroughly had the raid been thought out that when an old broker, ill in bed, stubbornly refused to give his hoard up to the party who asked for it, and one of them struck him, the

leader of the gang shouted out, "No violence! We don't want trouble with the Free State police!" and gave the old man a note to be shown to any brother-marauders, explaining that they had left him his diamonds and that they were to do the same, to atone for the blow he had suffered.

The whole affair ended in a carouse, after the merry Tin Towners had accompanied their despoilers from lodging to lodging, chaffing each other, and saying they supposed the gang would return next day and sell them the stones over again. Prices were naturally low enough, as the Tin Town brokers had to get the stones out of Africa, and dared not touch at a Cape port.

The gang, however, had other intentions. There was trouble over the division of the plunder, and a select few of the miscreants bolted for the Free State, with the greater part of it, in a Cape-cart, with the rest of the gang hot-foot after them. These overtook the fugitives, nearly massacred them, seized the stones they had made off with, and were presently arrested for highway robbery with violence on the Free State roads, tried in Bloemfontein, and sentenced, to the number of a score of so, to eighteen months' hard labour.

They were duly adorned with knee and ankle chains, lodged in gaol, and given over to me to be put to hard labour. I protested to President Brand that most of them were fat and over middle age, and had evidently never done a day's work in their lives. However, I found them occupation shifting the debris of the old Presidency.

There was one big surly "Kimberleyite" in the gang, who was constantly giving trouble, dodging

even the light work he was allotted, and endangering discipline generally. At last, the Chief Warder told me he would not stand the man's insolence any longer, and I called him up from among the others, and asked him if he intended to do the work the warder gave him. He retorted that he had never pushed barrows before, and would see us all, myself included, to hell before he began now. As the rest of his mates had slackened off to listen, I said sharply, "Look here, my man, you don't seem to know that I can send you up to the gaol for ten lashes for far less insolence and disobedience than you have shown, and by God, the next complaint I have of you, up you go! Now get back to your work!" He slunk off, to muttered comments from his companions that they had told him not to be a b—— f—— and so on.

Next day, a dirty object, looking as if he had been rolled in the mud and had his face pounded with bricks, slouched up to me, touched his cap, and began to mutter an apology. "Speak up, you swine, and let us hear you!" rang out from behind him. He glared at the hidden speaker, and said in more or less muffled tones, "Sorry I insulted you yesterday, sir! Know you do your best for us. I don't want to spoil things for the other fellows." He managed to get this out with "encouragement" from his monitor, and I told him "that was all right! I was sorry for them all, and was trying to make things as light as possible for them, but discipline must be kept up. He could go." I managed to pass near Scotty Smith, one of the leaders of the Tin Town episode, and asked him how the fellow had got into such a state. He replied with

a grin, "We know you are doing your best for us, Mr. Hallé, and that we might have been much worse off. We don't mean to let a brute like that spoil things, so we just tipped a wink to the warder last night, and took that chap into one of our cells and had a little argument with him!" "Pretty forcible one, it seems!"

The wind-up of the business was rather unusual. The day before the eighteen months was up, a regular procession of well-kept spiders and Cape-carts drove into Bloemfontein to the chief hotels, and put up. The next morning the shops were crowded by our friends, the released I.D. brokers, making all kinds of purchases, and by noon the three judges who had tried them, the State Secretary, myself and several other officials, were all invited by handsome cards to a banquet that night at the chief hotel, in celebration of the Tin Towners' release! Needless to say, we none of us took any notice of this colossal piece of impudence, but we heard from the proprietor of the hotel, later, that the repast had been sumptuous, the drink regardless of expense and the speakers eloquent on the mildness of the Free State law and administration. They drove off to Kimberley, cheering and waving flags.

A light on the native temperament and capacity for intrigue was provided about this time by the raid on Thaba'Nchu by Samuel Maroko. The Barolongs were a small independent tribe living within the Free State, under its protection, with stores and mission stations providing for its material, educational and spiritual wants, and itself providing capable domestic and other labour for the Free Staters. There was a dispute, just before my time, between two brothers,

Sepinare and Samuel Maroko, over succession to the vacant chieftainship, and the matter was laid before President Brand. He gave a verdict in favour of Sepinare, and ordered Samuel to reside on a Free State farm near the Kimberley border, with instructions to report himself every evening to the farmer.

This went on peacefully till one day, in the early 'eighties, when Samuel, after duly presenting himself at sunset at the homestead, returned to his kraal on the farm, mounted his horse, and with a handful of adherents rode at full speed through the night to Thaba'Nchu, finding relays of horses for himself and followers at convenient kraals of sympathisers, and gathering forces as he swept along. He arrived at Sepinare's village at sunrise, with 400 men, all mounted and armed with various types of guns, and made a surprise attack on the Royal kraal. Sepinare, taken unawares though he was, made a gallant defence, with the aid of loyal tribesmen, who rushed to his rescue, but was presently killed by a rifle bullet. His men fled or surrendered on the fall of their leader, and Samuel assumed command of the tribe, giving up his brother's body to the latter's wives.

News was borne to Bloemfontein by an ex-sheriff of the Free State, whom Sepinare had engaged as "Commander-in-Chief of his army." This gentleman, on being roused from his slumbers at dawn by the sound of firing and fighting, had jumped to the conclusion that here was a Basuto raid, and had promptly leapt on his horse and departed for Bloemfontein—rumour has it in his shirt—commandeering fresh horses at farms on the way—a record

ride of the Dick Turpin order. John Brand, on hearing that it was a question of the Basutos storming in, did a similar record in the mustering business, and had Thaba'Nchu invested by 4,000 armed and mounted Boers within forty-eight hours, summoned by the equivalent to the Scotch "Fiery Cross." Samuel was deposed and banished to a safe distance, and the Barolongs were incorporated into the Free State.

There were two interesting incidents connected with this tragi-comedy. Martinus Steyn, of the Executive, father of the future President, was sent on an inspection of the Basuto Border, as a matter of precaution, to see if the farmers still had the rifles and ammunition supplied them by the Government against Basuto raids. He told me that all these gentry, except about one in ten, had sold their rifles for three or four fat Basuto cows or oxen, apiece, and could only produce decrepit weapons, chiefly shot-guns. They were made to buy further good State guns, which, as Steyn said, with a shrug, would probably go the same way at increased profit.

The other point was a flaming report in an American paper, describing the storming and looting of the Barolong King's citadel and palace by the army of the King's brother, and the burning of King Sepinare's treasures, including priceless suits of ancient Japanese armour.

But for the trifling omission on Samuel's part to take the fighting strength and mobility of the Boers into account, his little adventure was conceived and carried out with a secrecy and thoroughness that compel admiration, and enhance respect for the native chiefs.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE IN THE TRANSVAAL AND SWAZILAND

THE discovery of gold in the Transvaal had hitherto been restricted to the north-east, where private diggers were alleged to have done surprisingly well in many instances. The finds in the Barberton district, and in the Moodie Hills, and even so far afield as Pigg's Peak, Swaziland, had by now roused considerable attention, and the discovery of banker reefs of high value on the Rand led to a regular rush to the Transvaal. Several people had gone up from Bloemfontein, and their reports led to the formation of a Syndicate, which, as my Government appointment had now been summarily closed, I was asked to represent. As the general depression in South Africa offered so little chance of bridge or railway work that I had serious thoughts of advertising in *The Times*, offering my services as a Commissioner of Works to "small Principalities or Republics" anywhere in the world, I accepted and started for the Transvaal as soon as free in Bloemfontein. I stopped on the Rand for a time, but the chances of doing much there were arrested by an enquiry from my Syndicate, "Why waste time there when Barberton is the one place to go to?" Our only success on the Rand was the pegging of forty claims near the "Jumpers," and selling them for £800. They were valued later at £40,000 each!

However, our Syndicate was too small, financially, to do much either on the Rand or at Barberton, and when I reached the latter place I found the rush had already set in back to the Rand, which I had just been compelled to leave, where, as people said, "You had your reefs almost in your back garden, and could drive to them, instead of having to climb precipices to look for them."

My connection with the eastern goldfields and Swaziland lasted till 1892, with visits to London in 1887 and 1888. During these five years I worked for my small Free State Syndicate and also for a larger London one, neither of which proved particularly successful. For the latter I certainly opened up the Komati goldfields and floated one or two companies, besides obtaining and parting with a large Swaziland concession to a leading Rand House, but some of my personal experiences are likely to be more interesting to the reading public than my mining activities.

One of the first shanties on the Rand was a wood-and-iron smithy, run up by a little English blacksmith. He had also run up a Union Jack on a pole outside. This roused the wrath, one morning, of a party of roughly clad Boers who happened to be strolling round, and the chief of them no less a personage than Groot Adriaan De la Rey, the chief of the Stellaland Freebooters, who had returned to the Transvaal after being turned out by Sir Charles Warren, exclaimed that he was not going to have any d——d English flag flying in the Transvaal, cut the halyards and brought the "Jack" down with a run. The little blacksmith, hearing the commotion, came out, caught

Adriaan in the act, and being a retired light-weight "pug," caught him one on the chin that sent him staggering back among his fellows. Recovering himself, the huge Boer made a rush, thinking to annihilate his small assailant, and was stopped by a straight left. At this, the whole Boer party showed an inclination to take a hand in the little one's slaughter; but a crowd had assembled by now, and a ring was formed, with the blacksmith and De la Rey inside, and the latter's friends were pushed back, with the intimation that if any of them wanted a bit too, there were plenty there who would oblige. The fight between David and Goliath did not last long, David displaying excellent science in side-stepping, ducking to Goliath's windmill blows, countering, getting under his guard, connecting with eye, heart, etc., etc., and generally using the big 'un as a chopping-block. At last, after being floored three or four times, Goliath had had enough, and left with his friends, wondering, probably, what was wrong with the world. David was helped by a cheering mob to hoist his flag again, and led off to celebrate the occasion.

I have mentioned this incident as significant of the new order of things dawning on the Transvaal, and prophetic of much that was to follow, but before dealing with some of my personal experiences in the Transvaal and Swaziland, I would like to summarise my impressions of the whole period of the rise of the diamond- and goldfields before they had settled down as two ordered and orderly industries. Both Kimberley and the Rand were honoured by the presence of as unconscionable a lot of blackguards as probably ever

assembled in one place at once. Fortunes were made and lost, many of them huge ones, with amazing rapidity, but it is safe to say that the value of the gold and diamonds won in those first years from the ground was a mere fleabite to the money lost by the unfortunate speculators—otherwise, mugs—all the world over. The temptation to swindle them was tremendous, and the alacrity displayed in yielding to it phenomenal. It was “each for himself and the devil take the hindmost.” He did not seem particular whom he caught in his net, either. Unexpected wealth, dubiously acquired, led easily to riotous living; drunkenness was so rampant that it has been seriously maintained that the wildness of the first gold boom was largely due to the fact that the majority of the people on the Rand were never more than half sober. Morality had fled away for the time, before the hosts of sex and “business.” As regards the former, the unmarried seemed to do as they chose, while the married avoided the divorce courts, because of its usually being a case of “six of one and half a dozen of the other.” As to business, anything was held permissible if it could be done within the letter of the law, with the assistance of a corruptible administration.

Why, there was even a certain amount of culture. How slight a seasoning in the general *potage* this was may be judged from the fact that the Duke of Abercorn, Chairman of the British South Africa Company, on passing through the Rand on business, asked a relative of his, whose efforts to do a legitimate developing business had been frustrated by a piece of sharp

practice on the part of one of the great houses, "How is it that one meets so few men in the Rand Club whom you would describe as English gentlemen?" To which the relative made answer, "Probably because to belong to the class that forms the majority of the members, one would have to do things which no English gentleman could do!" To which his Grace replied with a sigh, "I suppose that is so!"

While looking round for promising properties in the Barberton area, on behalf of my London Syndicate, I was approached by an old mining agent who had been through the earlier gold rushes farther north, and was alleged to know his way about on these new fields also. He told me of a property some thirty miles out, which he said he had caused to be thoroughly prospected, showed me magnificent samples, and altogether pitched a most appetising yarn. As, however, the terms he wanted involved some £30,000 cash and a heavy nominal capital altogether, I cabled to London, to know the limit up to which I might go, all conditions being favourable. I received a reply, "Will take anything you recommend up to £50,000 cash." The Syndicate had secured the support of certain well-known millionaire foreign princes. I showed the cablegram to my friend, the agent, and said I was now prepared to go out and view his property. "Ah vat!" he snorted, "no need to go out and view properties! Vid dot cable in your hand! Ve go view de Stock Exchange! Vid dot cable, ve turn dot property into vun hundert tousand pounds for each of us!" When I intimated that I did not do business on those lines, and was out there for my people's

health—not merely, as he suggested, for the good of my own—the old boy took it quite philosophically. “It was,” he said, “the usual dispensation of Providence. You could get dot cable, but could do noding vid it.” He, who could turn such a cable into a quarter of a million, could not get such a message, if he lived to a hundred.

A case that came under my notice in Johannesburg seemed to put the methods current there in a nutshell. Three minor capitalists—let us say “dog fish” rather than “sharks”—had floated an apparently promising property for £100,000, but it had exposed itself as absolutely hopeless before they had got machinery up, or boomed the shares higher than 30s. They decided to divide their huge parcel of shares into three; each to instruct his broker to sell his third at anything he could get for them, from 30s. downwards. Going into the Stock Exchange at noon to see how things were progressing, one of them met a second of the precious trio, jubilant. “No need for you fellows to bother about your little lots!” he exclaimed. “My man tells me he has found a mug to take our whole holding, and at thirty bob!” They were just off to tell the other two brokers to let the thing drop, when up comes No. 3, with the same glorious tale that his broker had also sold the whole lot at 30s. While still feeling particularly blue at this unfortunate piece of good luck, No. 1’s broker appeared on the scene with a similar tale of glorious catastrophe. They were on their way out to chew the cud of this unappetising news, when they met Barney Barnato, rubbing his hands with glee. “You three know, of course, that

you have to deliver me just three times the number of shares you have in the — G.M.C. at noon tomorrow? Eh? Vell, I shall not skin you quite naked! Joost leave you enough for a leedle new start!”

However, the Rand was a tough school, as well as a “university for toughs,” and our three heroes were not beaten yet, by any means! They were the only three directors, besides holding almost all the shares. So they called an emergency general meeting for that afternoon, declared it properly constituted, appointed one of themselves secretary, passed a solemn resolution, trebling the nominal capital of the company, had it entered in the Minute Book, and then went out to buy a rubber stamp and to collect all the dead scrip then cumbering half the offices in the town. These were duly rubber-stamped with the name of their threatened company, to the number needed, and Barnato was handed, next day, the full number of shares he had bought. Though momentarily bluffed, he soon recovered, on hearing what they had done, gathered his scrip together, and remarked: “A smart trick. I now go and off-load this leedle lot on de public to get my money back before dey vakens up.” I do not exactly vouch for the accuracy of this story, except as a sample of the yarns that were going the rounds.

To show the state of things at the other end of the social ladder in this topsy-turvy land, I must tell how, when walking down a half-finished road in Upper Barberton, with a Port Elizabeth attorney, to look at some building sites, we came across a gang of unholy-looking convicts, wearing the usual knee and ankle chains, but resting and smoking, with their spades,

shovels, barrows and pickaxes lying in the roadway. Not a white nor black warder was in sight. My friend, a nervous customer, was just saying, "I don't like this! Suppose these fellows turn nasty!" when up trotted a native warder with his rifle on his shoulder. He went up to a burly Bill Sikes and handed him a small packet. Bill opened it with a grunt, snarled and threw its contents at the perspiring native. "You black b—— f——!" he shouted, "didn't I give you a shilling to buy me a bit of Pears' soap, and you've bought me brown Windsor! You take that back and change it!"

But the one experience which I have always believed to be absolutely unique was when I advised a man under sentence of death for murder how to play his nap hand!

The man in question was a very presentable chap of the public-school variety, scion of a county family in the south of England. A "remittance man," aged about twenty-three. What he had done at home to persuade his people that it would be well if he went and did it somewhere else no one knew, but whether to drown the memory of it, or not, he certainly put away a totally superfluous amount of drink. One day, having exhausted his last remittance, and the loan capacity of his friends, he strolled out to Moodie's, to a small pub up the hill, and offered a handsome silver-mounted revolver for sale to a number of well-dressed Boers in the bar. One, a fine old specimen, took it in his hand, and asked its owner how it worked. "I'll show you," hiccupped the Englishman, taking it back, "it's quite simple!" And he

shot his questioner through the stomach, killing him promptly, and then fired again, and wounded another man. By now the crowd had recovered from its stupor, swarmed through the door, and set off downhill, shouting; the inebriated one standing in the doorway, shouting back, and taking pot-shots at them. He was tried in Barberton, sentenced to death, and was now in the local gaol, awaiting a date to be fixed.

It so happened that about this time a native house-boy in Steynsdorp, Komati Goldfields (where I was busy trying to persuade myself and others that the innumerable small reefs threading the hill-sides must ultimately join with a few large ones, with depth), murdered his master and mistress in an appallingly brutal manner. He was lodged in gaol, and, as Paul Kruger flatly refused to allow him to be hanged at Steynsdorp, as an object-lesson to the natives of our lonely area, the miners and prospectors of the fields simply took him out of the gaol one night and lynched him at the slaughter poles of the local butchery. When the news reached Pretoria, President Kruger was furious. It was said that he did not care how many natives we lynched, but he would not have his gaols broken into! In the upshot, some twenty whites of Steynsdorp were arrested and rushed to the Barberton gaol to await trial. We formed a Defence Committee at the Komati fields, with myself as Chairman, and I had to ride into Barberton fairly frequently to consult with the prisoners. On one occasion I found them playing nap in the prison yard, seated on empty gin cases, with another as table. A pleasant-faced young fellow, evidently of good class, invited me to share his

gin case, and asked how he ought to play his hand. I gave my opinion, and we became quite chummy. When at last I took my men away for a chat, one of them asked me dryly if I knew who it was to whom I had been chatting? "The condemned murderer!" "Well," I retorted, "you were playing nap with him yourself!" "Ah!" he said, "but then we are lynchers, and much in the same boat!" "They'd call you 'vigilantes' in America. Upholders of the law by stringing up its breakers."

However, we got them all off at the trial. Thanks to the innocent advice of Mr. (later Judge) Wessels, every one of the accused put in an affidavit signed by two respectable Boer farmers, burgesses of the Transvaal, that the said accused was either in Delagoa, Cape Town, Durban, Rhodesia, Johannesburg, or elsewhere, on the night of the lynching. The Judge looked frankly puzzled, but instructed the jury that they could not go behind the signatures of their fellow-Boer farmers, a thing they did not seem the least inclined to do! As to my friend the murderer, his sentence was commuted to ten years' imprisonment.

The only other unlicensed slaughterer of man I came across in my travels was a little Frenchman, a barman, in Swaziland. He had been a sailor, and on one voyage had been felled to the ground with a marline-spike by a brutal, drunken captain. Lying in his bunk, half-dazed, two afternoons later, he had been booted to the wheel, and stood there, hardly able to hold the spokes, with the skipper towering over him and vowing blue murder if the ship went off her course by a millimetre. It was a rough, gloomy evening

with driving rain, and at last, when our friend felt he could hold out no longer, the captain turned up his collar, announced his intention to go below—unconscious prophecy!—and turned to look over the taffrail. He bent well over, and the little chap at the wheel saw his opportunity. A quick glance round showed the deck deserted: a sudden stoop, and lightning-swift jerk of the skipper's legs just above his feet, and over went "Frenchy's" enemy headlong into the ship's wake, with a yell of rage and fear!

When the mate came on deck a few minutes later and asked the trembling and exhausted little man if he had seen the captain, he gasped out that "he said he was going below." He asked the mate to have him relieved. "He was that weak and ill, he'd tumble over presently." The mate looked at him, yelled for someone forward to hurry up and take the wheel, and told Frenchy to turn in—everyone knew how he had been man-handled. The little 'un staggered below: plainly no slayer of a 6-foot 6-inch skipper! and stayed in his bunk for three days, listening to the crew hunting for their missing captain.

However, when they reached Delagoa, he thought it well to desert, lest he should talk in his sleep. In this Swaziland Alsatia, he was safe enough!

In the Komati Goldfields I went down a 90-foot shaft one day to look at a reef some prospectors swore they had opened up, and climbing back with a bag of samples slung behind me, my foot slipped in one of the greasy footholds in the corner, and I hung there by a slippery rope till the men on top drew me up. My bare arm was barked by a vein of arsenical pyrites,

midway, and swelled to the size of a huge ham by next day. I had to lie upon a stretcher in one of the prospectors' two grass huts, and as luck would have it, a doctor I knew happened to be passing through Steynsdorp on his way to Swaziland, and a note sent in by these prospectors to the hotel there brought him out to me. He had a patent tent on his saddle and stayed a week, and pulled me through by the quite damnable process of draining the arm daily. But I was delirious for three days, and must have hopped my twig had he not chanced to ride by. He cheerfully informed me that if there had been anyone handy whom he could have trusted to help him, he would have had the arm off. We were ten miles from Steynsdorp and forty from Barberton. When recovering, I used to lie chuckling at night to hear my two prospectors cursing each other for making a row and waking me up, as they staggered home from a wayside pub, four miles off, drunk from celebrating my cure. They had kept perfectly sober and nursed me like a baby when in danger.

When able to get about and read my mail, I found a letter from my London Syndicate instructing me to return to England to help in reconstructing and enlarging it. It was a Godsend of a message, as I was too weak to mouch about, and carried my right arm in a sling for a couple of months more, so I left my affairs in the hands of a capable young assistant, and left for London, via Durban, in the following week.

Hawarden Castle, the boat I travelled on to England in 1887, called at Lisbon, to convey the Crown Prince and Princess of Portugal to London for the Queen's

Jubilee; the Princess being of the Royal Family of Orleans, and unable, therefore, to pass through France. The princely pair were not ready when we arrived in the Tagus, and the ship had to be delayed till the next day at noon. The old captain was furious, but the passengers were delighted, as it gave us an opportunity to go ashore and see the Portuguese capital. A party of some ten of us, with an old Harrismith lawyer and his wife as chaperons, accordingly made our way to that magnificent hotel, the Braganza, and took rooms for the night.

We saw most of the sights of the town, and went to the great circus in the evening to hear Sarasate. It was the first time any of us had heard the exquisitely delicate playing of the great violinist, and we joined in the tumultuous applause of the vast audience for all we were worth! To our amazement, this did not seem to please the house! Fists were shaken at us, curses howled; and as we thought this strange people did not consider our applause pronounced enough, we shouted and thumped on the floor with our sticks louder and louder, only to meet with greater fury and uproar. The whole audience was now on its feet raving at us, and we began to feel very uneasy and disconcerted. Fortunately, an Englishman of the cable service, who had returned from leave on the *Hawarden Castle*, was sitting in the stalls. He rushed up to our box, shouted to us to stop our d——d noise, exclaiming, "Drop it, you fools! Don't you know that hammering with sticks on a floor is the Portuguese for hissing?" and yelled to the audience that we were only benighted Englishmen applauding

à la mode anglaise. What would have been the end of it had this good fellow not been on the spot, Heaven knows !

Next day, at noon, the Royal party swept out to our ship on two splendid old State barges dating from the fifteenth century. The larger one was manned by three tiers of oars, or sweeps. It had a tall prow in front and a long and broad platform as quarter-deck with ten or twelve gold-and-ebony State chairs screwed on the floor, in a curve. The oarsmen were clad in blue trousers, white shirts with broad red sashes round their waists and the arms of Portugal blazoned on their left breasts, the whole rig-out capped by a quaint red head-dress of the brigand order. A specially fine specimen of a man stood by the prow, with a huge, antiquated boat-hook, and a similar apparition at the stern steered the vessel with a gigantic scull. The Royal Standard waved from tall staffs, fore and aft. This splendid craft came with the speed of a torpedo boat, under the efforts of its sixty oarsmen,—in old days, one supposes, galley slaves. The smaller galley bringing the servants and luggage was a forty-oared one, but hardly less impressive. The old King and Queen were seated in the centre of the curve of State chairs on the greater galley, and the Prince and Princess, with the combined suites, on each side.

The Prince and Princess made themselves very popular on the voyage by their geniality and absence of side. The ladies' saloon had been converted into a reserved drawing-room for them, but they would not hear of it, and had it thrown open again. I nearly got

caught by Her Royal Highness one day while finishing a caricature, in my sketchbook, of a back view of "Portuguese Royalty by Moonlight." He was charming, but round and short; she a lady, "divinely tall," of the wand-like variety, and, as they used to perambulate the deck after dinner, with their arms round each other's waist, the sight was arresting. She must have seen my alarm as she stopped near me, and passed on; but a minute or two later one of her gentlemen approached me, bowed elaborately, and introduced himself as the "Duca di Pomatum-Pinard," or the like, and asked leave to see my sketches. He was pleased to smile at the reproductions of other fellow-passengers, but when he came to my outrage on his Royal House, he snorted and glared at me.

I was amused, if startled, one night at coming on deck in a heavy, fur-lined coat which I had found useful in high-veld winters, when a pretty young Portuguese *prima donna*, who, in the charge of a pleasant elder sister, was going to London and Paris, sprang from her chair in a group of ladies, threw herself in my arms, exclaiming "Don Ottavio!" and began warbling a passionate love-song from one of the operas. Naturally, I lifted her up and stalked round the decks with her, while she continued to pour her strains into my left ear. However, as she knew no lingo but Portuguese and opera Italianese, and could not understand a word of my French, all I could do was to warble back: "Tu qu'ai la bocca dolce," with illustrations, and presently return her to the lap of her sister, who laughingly threatened to box both our ears for us, as *deux méchants*!

Fortunately, the Royalties dined later, so I did not butt into them with my fair burden !

There was a delightful old German lady on board who had lived for thirty years in Sechele's country with her husband, a trader, and was now on her way home for a holiday. She told us that when her husband had gone to Germany on business a few years before, and had told Sechele he did not like leaving his wife alone and unprotected, that astute old chief had told him to go in peace ! When the two were there, he, Sechele, protected them both. When he was away, he protected the wife. It did not make the slightest difference to her whether her husband were there or not ! This dear old girl had twenty magnificent karosses with her, as gifts for her family. She used to spread them on deck to air them, and on the Princess admiring them one day, and being nice to their owner, she made me write a note to Her Royal Highness, begging her to accept the lot, in return for her Royal condescension ! Protests were useless. The things were worth £10 apiece.

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CHAPTER IX

LONDON REVISITED

ON reaching home, I found a message to say the family was at the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery Summer Exhibition, and bidding me come along. Clad in my brother's poshest suit and hat, I swaggered off there, thinking it a change indeed from the grass-hut life I had been living in the Komati only two months before. The first man I struck on entering was Alma Tadema, with a cheery, "Hello, Gus! Where have you been? Haven't seen you for months!" I told him I could quite believe that, as I had been in South Africa for seven years! "And where last?" "Swaziland." "Ha!" said the inveterate joker, "and why is a Swazi Princess like a prophet?" Without waiting for an answer, he rapped out, "Because she has little honour in her own country!" and bolted away.

I was caught up in the old atmosphere of artistes' gossip, music, parties, dances, theatres, at once, with the excitement of the Queen's Jubilee and the struggle between Gladstone and Disraeli thrown in.

Decidedly the most interesting among my earliest experiences in London in 1887 was that of dining with Sir George Baden-Powell at the House of Commons and hearing a debate afterwards, from just beside the Bar of the House. Admiral Colomb, Lord Robert

Bruce and others were of the party, though they all had to troop off so often for divisions that conversation was a little disjointed. I was tickled to find, on enquiry, that not one of them knew what the six divisions had been about.

After dinner we adjourned to the Bar, and I was introduced as the "Free State Commissioner of Works," to Sir Henry James, then Solicitor-General, and other members of the Government. Sir Henry asked what new thing I had brought with me from Africa, and I replied, "Only the news, if it is news, that we are about to have a war there, sooner or later, compared to which all other colonial wars would be the merest piffle!" And I began to tell them of the Boer feeling in the two "Republics." Baden-Powell cut in with, "It's no use, Hallé! I told them all about it when I came back, and they didn't mind a bit. They will only listen politely to what you are telling them now!" I shrugged my shoulders, but Sir Henry James said earnestly, "You must not think, Mr. Hallé, that we disregard what you and Baden-Powell tell us, but there are certain troubles which one has to allow to come to a head before treating. If we asked the British public to let us prepare for a war of uncertain dimensions at an uncertain date, we would be thrown out in a week!" Almost exactly what Lord Kimberley had told President Brand, some ten years previously! Security in office beats security of the country, every time, with politicians and statesmen of this kidney.

A friend of ours, Dr. Becker, had acquired a death-mask, said to be that of Shakespeare. It had belonged

to a Dutch ambassador and had been preserved in his family ever since as a genuine relic. The family having fallen upon evil times, a sale of their effects was held, and Dr. Becker had bought the mask as being indeed a death-mask of Shakespeare and of no one else. Certainly there was the strongest evidence, short of documentary, in support of Dr. Becker's case. The head was a most beautiful one; quite in the character of the accepted pictures and the Stratford bust. The letters, "W. S.," at the back had indisputably been impressed in the plaster when still wet, and the hairs in the moustache, still projecting, showed that it was a genuine death-mask made by filling the hollow mask, taken from the dead face itself; the plaster settling round the roots of the hairs. These were still of the auburn colour attributed to Shakespeare, and Queen Victoria had begged one from Dr. Becker, and wore it in a locket.

Dr. Becker brought it to our house one night, and was very indignant because Carlyle, when the learned doctor produced it reverently for his inspection, had taken it out of its handsome receptacle between his fingers and thumb, "twiddled it round as if it had been a common saucer," and exclaimed, "This is ne'er the head that held the brain that wrote *The Tempest*!" "If not," said the irate doctor, "who was there in England in those times, with the initials 'W. S.,' of sufficient importance to have his death-mask preserved in a Dutch ambassador's family for hundreds of years?" Dicky Doyle suggested Sir Philip Sidney, but as I ventured to point out, "Philip" was not spelt with a "W," and Sir Philip, according to miniatures still

extant, was a lantern-jawed man, clean-shaven, with sandy hair growing where Shakespeare was bald as a billiard ball. The ambassador was known as a very cultured man, and friend of the English poets of the time. We were all converted, enthusiastically, to Becker's side. The mask only showed the head in front of the ears, but the brow was most noble, and the expression tranquil in the extreme, with a deep line, almost like a knife-gash, at each corner of the mouth, under the moustache.

I came across at this time a characteristic story of two distinguished painters. Whistler was one mass of nerves and excitability; Legros, the cool, calm, humorous peasant of his Breton race. The two once had a quarrel, due to some dry remark by Legros on one of Whistler's somewhat unintelligible pictures. The witticism had been retailed by some malicious friend—probably a female model—to the touchy American, and had sent him round in a right royal rage to the placid Breton's studio. Here he raved and raged about. Legros, clad as usual in his blue blouse, and smoking his inevitable great pipe, calmly continued to paint and smoke in silence.

At last Whistler, unable to contain himself, stormed up to his huge adversary, shook his fist at him, and piped out, "Legros! What would you do if I told you I was going to pull your nose?" The Frenchman took his pipe out of his mouth, remarked quaintly, "I should soap it well!" and resumed pipe and paint-brush. Whistler gasped, stared, and did the only thing he could do—went out of the studio.

An amusing sequel to the occurrence followed a few days later. Heilbuth and Dicky Doyle were dining with us, and my brother, C. E. Hallé, told the above story. Everyone at the table laughed except Heilbuth. This French artist, whose painting ability was, fortunately, greater than his sense of humour, glared at my brother, and rapped out, "Mais c'est impossible ! Legros est un homme d'honneur !" and he struck himself several sharp and rapid blows on the chest. Dicky Doyle's eyes twinkled, but my father led the conversation on to less dangerous ground.

At this period, Baron de Stern, who died later worth some sixteen millions, used to give big dinner-parties. I remember one of these dinners, at which I took in Miss de Stern, partly because the refined sumptuousness of the banquet and the distinction that marked the older guests were impressive, and partly because of an incident towards the close of it. The "venerable" butler—no less a term would suit—was bringing round a special bottle, reclining in its own special receptacle, at dessert, and whispered me in tones of awe, "Port, sir !" I was really fed up by then, and murmured back, "No, thanks !" This made a young de Stern, sitting next but one to his sister, lean across and say with amazement, "I say, Hallé, are you refusing Father's '47 port ?" I hastily beckoned the majestic retainer back, and soothed his plainly outraged dignity by changing my mind. All the same, this '47 port, though probably worth a guinea a drop, tasted to my uninitiated palate uncommonly like ink of still older date. To watch the faces of the elderly connoisseurs round about made

me feel like a spectator at the parade of the Chinese Emperor in his magic clothes.

Baron Meyer de Rothschild once came to call on my father when we were at Egypt House. He was bubbling over with amusement as he hurried on to the lawn where we were having tea. "Do you know, Hallé," he exclaimed, "I was not certain of my way, and called at one of those houses outside Cowes. A big footman opened the door when I knocked, and just as I said, 'Does ——' he slammed it in my face, with a 'We don't want any!' He took me for a missionary with tracts!" And he fairly shrieked with delight! As his coat and hat looked none too new, and he carried a disreputable old umbrella, clutched round the middle, we could not help being convulsed, too; and it did not mend matters when his daughter, Hannah, later Lady Rosebery, who was having tea with us, said: "And something funny happened to me, too, and only last night. I woke up, and a great white face stared at me through the windows, and when I sat up, behold, it was only the moon!" There were a good many other people present, and Miss Hannah de Rothschild was known in Cowes circles as "the Moon" for some considerable time after.

We were all invited to view the procession at the Queen's Jubilee, to and from the Abbey, from the balconies of George Smith's spacious offices on, fortunately, the shady side of Waterloo Place. The sight of the procession as it came through a triumphal arch, from Lower Regent Street into broad Waterloo Place, was inspiring. A magnificent figure was that

of the German Crown Prince Frederick, in his white cuirassier uniform, with gold eagle outspread on his silver helmet and red field-marshal's baton resting on his hip. In fact, as the band of Royal Princes, some twenty in number, rode three abreast, in front of the open carriage in which the old Queen sat, they seemed to move in an aura of Royal grace and distinction. For popular favour, however, they were run close by an old Indian member of the picked native body-guard, heading the procession. This old boy, in his picturesque garb and turban and with white beard to his waist, was splendidly mounted on a charger that curvetted and pranced like a playful lamb, the fine old warrior sitting him like a centaur!

An ambulance, with orderlies and nurses, was drawn up behind the Guards' Memorial. The pavements were crowded, and while we were all waiting for the show to begin, a woman fainted just opposite to us, from the terrific heat. Two ambulance orderlies had her out on a chair in front of the ambulance in "no time," and helped her to what was palpably a brandy and soda. Four or five other people promptly collapsed also, to a roar of laughter from the crowds on both sides.

After one of my father's afternoon recitals in St. James's Hall—during which series, by the way, he played the whole of Beethoven's Sonatas—he brought an old friend, a great music-lover, home to dinner. He had that afternoon played the 111th Sonata, a colossal work, lasting forty-five minutes. Our guest, old Mr. Sartoris, after dinner, looked round the drawing-room. We were living in a house in Maida

Vale, that had been Fortuny's, and that eccentric artist had built three studios on to it, each one more sumptuously magnificent than the others, the middle one, now our drawing-room, being immense and lofty, with a dark oak dado, old tapestry above it, a carved fireplace with an ingle-nook, at one end, and a conservatory at the other. Well, Sartoris, looking round, said gruffly that fine as the 111th had sounded that afternoon, the real place to hear it would be a music-room like this. My father at once exclaimed: "You're quite right! It would sound much better here. *Fortissimos* and *pianissimos* are equally lost in a big hall. I will play it again, now!" And despite Sartoris's protests that to play a piece three-quarters of an hour long twice over within a few hours was too much, he moved to the grand piano, and played the 111th with an effect unimaginably finer and greater than in St. James's Hall, the thunderous passages resounding and the delicate phrases whispering in the contrast Beethoven himself intended. The performance, besides being a gigantic *tour de force*, left an imperishable memory with the half-dozen or so privileged to be present. It taught one, once and for all, that chamber music, to be heard at its best, must be played in a music-room, not in a hall.

Sartoris had a son, Algy, a boyhood friend of my own, who happened to cross the Atlantic on a liner conveying Nellie Grant, General Grant's granddaughter, back home. This led to a marriage between the two, and the marriage to the appearance of yet another little Algy Sartoris on the scene, who, when he grew up, married my niece, daughter of that sister of

mine, Louise, who had married the Frenchman, Henri Noufflard. So we are connected through my mother with a distinguished Confederate General, Beauregard, whose cousin she was, and through my niece with that great Federal General, Grant, whose granddaughter, Nellie Sartoris, was a most lively and amusing young person.

Two invitations I have often recalled were, first, to a reception at Cardinal Manning's, and the second to a soirée at the Royal Colonial Institute. I regret to say my younger brother and I arrived shamefully late at the Cardinal's from some private party ; got there, in fact, as the solemn but courteous old butler was showing out the last of the guests. He informed us of the fact, and we were about to leave also, after conveying a message of excuses and apologies, when the Cardinal, passing through the hall, enquired into the matter. I explained, with apologies, and was again about to leave, but His Eminence would not hear of it ; took us into his library, sent for champagne and biscuits, neither of which he touched, supplied cigars, and settled us down for half an hour's chat of the most kindly and interesting nature ; we, probably, saw more of the real Manning than any two of his earlier guests.

At the Colonial Institute, I was surprised and interested to note a number of fine, tall, perfectly dressed men, black as the ace of spades, among the guests. I was told they were chiefs from north-west South Africa, many of them in course of being educated at English and Scotch universities. One, at least, of the Basuto chiefs had also been at an English university. There were colonials of all degrees, official,

industrialists, merchants and other settlers also present, and one had an extraordinary sense of the "unifying" influence of the Pax Britannica, and of wonderment as to the part likely to be played in the future by the blacks of North and South Africa.

I shall not easily forget the day on which my father came into my bedroom to show me a letter from Lord Salisbury, telling him that the Queen had decided to bestow a knighthood on him. The family had expressed themselves as being as well pleased as he evidently was himself, and I naturally added my congratulations to "Sir Charles"! There was an interesting footnote to the Premier's letter, to the effect that there were two ways of taking the distinction: by letters patent, costing some £94, or by "accolade," which, Lord Salisbury pointed out, was much cheaper, as it would merely mean a half-crown railway ticket to Windsor. I asked the Dad if the poor old Queen was really roped in in this way to save her noble knights £93 17s. 6d. a piece! He replied that, in any case, he wasn't going to waste over £90 for something he could get for 2s. 6d.!

Anyway, the ceremony at Windsor was, according to his account, most impressive. The Queen stood surrounded by officers of State, at one end of a stately chamber, with a crimson cushion before her and a light sword in her hand. The "postulants" stood at the other end of the chamber, arranged in order, and at a signal from the Master of Ceremonies, advanced, one by one, each bowing three times *en route*, knelt on one knee on the cushion and gave their names in turn to the M.C., on which Her Majesty

touched them lightly on the shoulder and said, "Rise up, Sir James," John or Richard, as the case might be. The new knight then retired, with the same ceremony, backwards, a feat which must have taken a good bit of the stiffness off the atmosphere. As if to add a touch of hilarity to the function, one stout gentleman, a Mayor from the wilds of Australia, who had played host on the occasion of a Royal tour, was so overwhelmed at the solemnity of the investiture that he completely lost his head. He hurried up when his time came to advance, plumped down on the cushion on both knees and joined his hands in prayer! The Queen bit her lips and murmured to Ponsonby, "And his name?" The M.C. bent down and whispered, "What might your name be, sir?" "Eh?" asked the bewildered one. "What's your name?" repeated Ponsonby more insistently. "I—I've forgotten!" gasped the Australian. "He says he has forgotten, Madam!" reported Ponsonby, *sotto voce*, and the Queen softly touched her confused subject on the shoulder, and murmured, "Rise up, Sir Nyum Nyum!" and he rose up—Sir Nyum Nyum for ever after, according to the strict rules of chivalry.

I was privileged to be present at my father's marriage, a little later, with Madame Norman Neruda, a marriage which, as I told my father, he was of course at full liberty to conclude, if he wished, but which, out of loyalty to my mother, his first wife, he could not expect me to approve. However, most of us attended the early ceremony at the Brompton Oratory, and I shall never forget the amazed murmur among the congregation who had waited on after early Mass,

scenting a marriage from our appearance, when, instead of my youngest sister, of 5 feet 9 inches, and the youngest Neruda boy, a Viking of 6 feet 2 inches, who had walked in together, the elderly people, of seventy-one and fifty years of age respectively, marched up to the altar !

When we left the church, my father slipped a sovereign into my hand, and the marriage notice, and asked me to hurry off to *The Times* and put the notice in for next day. I did so, and had to interview about half a dozen big-wigs of that paper before I could persuade them of my *bona fides* as a son of the hero of the occasion and the genuineness of the information. The Duchess of Montrose had just celebrated a similarly unexpected marriage, and *The Times*, in a leader on the double event, said that notable people really should not burst these surprises on the public.

I did not attend the wedding breakfast at the bride's house, but we learnt that the Princess of Wales had been present, and had proposed the health of the pair, before their departure for Vienna.

When my well-bluffed brother and sisters and I were seated at lunch at our festive parent's house—we had known nothing of his intention three days before—I said that I did not intend to take my father's going off on his honeymoon quietly. He proposed to be away for a fortnight, and I proposed to take a box at some theatre or other every night till he came back, and at his expense ! If he kicked, I would stand the racket myself, but as I was just returning to South Africa, I didn't think he would. I invited the lot to come with me, and I went and they came, and the old boy paid up

like a bird—a wryneck by choice!—when he came back. We saw everything worth seeing meanwhile.

About a fortnight before the surprise was sprung on us, my eldest sister—who, since our own mother died, had acted as head of my father's house, breaking a marriage engagement with a fine young Manchester merchant, later M.P., to do so—gave one of her big musical evenings at Fortuny's house, mentioned earlier.

The huge centre drawing-room was crowded to suffocation, with every holder of a big name in London at the time, from Princes downward, listening to some great artiste or other, and I had withdrawn to the door of the refreshment room. My eldest sister came and asked me why I did not go in and talk? People knew I was back, and wanted to chat with "the brother from Africa." I surprised her by asking how long this silly sort of thing was going on. There was hardly a person present who could not buy the Dad up out of his or her yearly income; the Dad was over seventy, and she was exploiting brains and fingers which might fail at any moment. She calmly told me I did not know what I was talking about! Unless a great musician kept up a great show, he would fade out of things in six months. I cited a number who kept up their standing on no show at all, and we nearly quarrelled. However, she went off on her duties; and a few weeks later, my father's marriage with Madame Norman Neruda threw her, for good and all, out of her position as the mistress of his home and society representative at three days' notice. Her friends stood by her, of course, and she lived comfort-

ably to the age of eighty, and was killed then, on her way to Mass, by a youngster on a motor-cycle.

A still more poignant irony touched my second sister. She had married the young proprietor of the second greatest cloth factory in France, and I heard, on my second visit to London, that her husband was about to sell his factory to the other and greater concern, on "most favourable terms." I expostulated with my sister. Her husband was doing very well; why be greedy and risk things? I might have saved my breath! Again I did not know what I was talking about! Everything was quite safe and sound, and so on. The deal was put through, and within a year the combined firms went to glory and my brother-in-law's sound business proved to be the sole asset to pay a decent dividend on the unsound one's liabilities. He himself had to take the position of manager of the factory of which he had been proprietor. However, my sister and one of her daughters came by deserved honours during the Great War for services rendered to France.

My third sister's story was still more dramatic. Invited to go a long yachting cruise with a married couple, the party picked up a young officer of the Royal Scots, at Malta. My sister was a lovely girl, and moonlight amid the isles of Greece brought on an engagement. Returning to Malta, they found that his regiment had been ordered to Egypt. He had to follow up, and the two agreed to leave the announcement of the engagement till he returned to England. He fell at Tel-el-Kebir, and my sister learnt it through *The Times*. A few years later she joined the "Little

Sisters of the Poor," and eventually became an Abbess of the Order.

My fourth sister lived to be the last remaining representative of our family of nine in England ; one brother being in Australia and I in South Africa. She was a well-known sculptress, designed the Stanley and Newman gold medals, the decorations for the Women's Section of the Chicago Exhibition, and was created a C.B.E. for various inventions for use in camps and hospitals during the Great War.

My own case was also slightly ironical. My promising prospects in South African mining, which had won me two trips to England, and seemed to offer a prospect of returning shortly with a competence, proved fairy gold. We had floated a Gold-mining Company for £100,000, as first of a series apparently certain to follow, and had spent over £20,000 in opening up and equipping this one, when the firm that had underwritten our £50,000 working capital, and had paid up £25,000, announced that it had placed the other £25,000 with a man in Paris, who had now defaulted. The British courts, before whom we laid the case, ordered us to sue the Paris man, not the London one ! A strange business. In any case, we sued three men in Paris, who all proved to be the wrong ones, and by then my Syndicate's funds were exhausted after its prior strain, and it had to close down, leaving me stranded in the Komati. However, the eventual clearing up of the properties I had refusals of gave me enough for a fresh start in Johannesburg.

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CHAPTER X

SWAN-SONG OF THE SWAZIS

IF there is one incident in my long life to which I can look back with sincere satisfaction, it is to my share in the results of the Sir Francis de Winton's Commission. During my second period of activities in the Komati Goldfields and Swaziland, after my return from London in 1888, negotiations were opened with the Imperial Government by President Kruger, of the Transvaal, with a view to a possible Transvaal Protectorate over Swaziland. It had always been the custom with Transvaal Governments to try to smother up internal embarrassments by external expansion. Sir Charles Warren's expedition had only just euchred a freebooting attempt on "Stellaland," a portion of Bechuanaland to the west of the Transvaal, and now here was Paul Kruger trying to camouflage the sorry state of his country, not yet saved by the new gold-mining industry, by an acquisition of Swaziland to the east.

Mbandine, the King of Swaziland, was the only remaining independent native chief south of the Limpopo. His people were the one tribe that had held their own against the Zulus. They had fought alongside the British in the Sekukuni War, and were a fine, upstanding race. Gold, tin and other minerals were known to exist in the country, and the Pigg's

Peak Gold-mining Company was already an established gold-mine. Since the gold rush began at Barberton and Moodie's, Swaziland had become the happy hunting-ground of the concession seekers, and the Alsatia of the South African scallawag.

An appearance of order had been secured by the appointment of "Offy" Shepstone as white adviser and secretary to King Mbandine, but the Concession scandal had grown beyond all bounds. There were, of course, legitimate mining, grazing, trading and land concessions by the score. I had myself secured a land and mining concession for my London Syndicate, paying hard cash for it, and the whole country was pretty well included under such titles, Boers holding most of the grazing rights. Besides these legitimate concessions, which practically closed the field, certain inglorious persons had conceived and secured banking, gambling and auctioneering concessions, and finally a concession for granting concessions! Many of them had been bought up by the Transvaal Government, which now applied to the Imperial Government for a Protectorate over the whole country—practically for its annexation by the Transvaal. A joint commission, with Sir Francis de Winton representing Great Britain, and Mr.—later Judge—Krause among its Transvaal members, came to Swaziland to investigate and report. As I have already said, I held a mining and land concession on behalf of my Syndicate, and the manager of the Pigg's Peak Gold-mining Company, Mr. Deering, and I formed a committee representing the British, or, as we were dubbed, the White Concessionaires. We met and drew up the case for a British

Protectorate, and against annexation to the Transvaal, and when Sir Francis distinctly told me that the case, as I had verbally put it to him, would, if set down in writing, materially help the Imperial Government in resisting the pleas of the Transvaal, I drew up a voluminous document in the same sense, as well as also, at his request, a confidential report to him, in which I spoke pretty freely about the Transvaal, its story and representatives. This report, I found to my stupefaction, had been handed by Sir Francis to the Transvaal half of the Commission, for "information." I hope they liked it!

With the help of some of the other concessionaires, I had copies made of my major document—working day and night—and we sent them round to every British concessionaire in the country for signature, and Deering and I handed them in. As Sir Francis again expressed the opinion that my two documents would be most helpful to the British Cabinet, I was amazed to learn that he had, in his report, strongly advised the country being handed over to the Transvaal! As is known, however, the Imperial Government announced presently that, much as they valued Sir Francis's opinion, they had decided, on the evidence, to reject his advice and retain Swaziland under the protection of Great Britain. As the "evidence" supplied by the Blue book consisted almost entirely of my memoranda and viva voce examination before the Commission, together with statements I had secured from my fellow-concessionaires, I felt justified in claiming that I had a considerable hand in checking these Boer ambitions in the east,

The Warren Expedition had checked them in the west, and Cecil Rhodes was about to "kraal" Kruger in the north, by what is now known as Rhodesia. The later proclamation of the coast from Natal to Portuguese East Africa as British was to complete the process of stemming the Boer policy of smothering internal decay by external expansion.

The course of events since has greatly broadened the views of the South African Dutch political world on Native policies, but no true British statesman, reviewing the treatment allotted by the Transvaal to Native tribes within its clutches, would have been willing to subject still further tribes to a possibility of that treatment. That earlier advice to the Boers, in favour of the ox-wagon against the railway-train, was also scarcely a promise of progress, as I did not fail to drive home at the time !

To come to the Swazis themselves, they struck me as a fine, well-built, independent race, hardly, perhaps, as far advanced as the Basutos, but equally intelligent and of better physique. Their king, Mbandine, was an enormous person, tall, but inordinately fat ; cruel, and of violent temper, but capable of self-restraint in an emergency. I was present one day when a bitter quarrel occurred between him and his adviser, Offy Shepstone. The latter had declared that something or other could not be done, and on Mbandine violently declaring that it could and would be done, Shepstone had risen, said quietly but emphatically, "No !" and coolly walked to his pony, mounted and cantered off. The next few moments were critical. Mbandine glared and growled with fury, his face taking that

livid colour common to natives under great stress of emotion. I noticed several of the indunas squatting around fingering their assegais. At last the King made an impatient gesture of dismissal, motioned for help to rise, and moved off to his kraal. The incident struck me as showing both courage on Shepstone's side and self-mastery on the King's, and being creditable to both.

I was fortunate enough to be present at the last great annual "Feast of the First Fruits" held in the reign of Mbandine, a function not only most striking in itself, but marked on this occasion by various quite interesting incidents. Practically the whole Swazi nation was present, with some 12,000 men under arms, and the various ceremonies occupied three days.

Besides the white concessionaires, who were present as it were by right, a number of people had ridden or driven over from Barberton, a long day's journey away. We were all lined up by Shepstone and his assistant, Penfold, on one side of what might be called the show ground, to the right and left of the huge dentist's chair which Thorburn, the proprietor of the hotel near by, had presented to Mbandine as a throne; the "army" was drawn up, four deep, opposite, with the women and girls at the ends.

Mbandine, who could assume a Henry VIII manner when he chose, walked slowly down our "white" line, attended by his indunas, looking keenly at each of us, and stopping to shake hands with those of us whom he recognised as possessing "caste" or "distinction." I noticed that he never made a mistake! Near by where I stood was a new-rich

from Barberton, flashily dressed in new riding breeches, new Norfolk coat, helmet and revolver belt, for all the world like a comic-opera digger. Just beyond him was a young fellow got up anyhow, but of an old English county family, and later to be heard of in Matabeleland. Our black monarch passed the flashy one with hardly a look, but shook hands warmly with the shabby hero, much to the open disgust of "His Flashiness."

When the King was seated, the chant that had been sung in parts by the whole dusky multitude changed its character to something processional, and a band of the King's wives, some forty to fifty dames, four abreast, moved with a kind of slow polka step, past the King, down the parade ground and so out. They were dressed in striking kirtles of breadths of iron and brass wire, with a leather belt round the waist studded with conical brass-headed nails, and finished just below the knee with a leather band similarly studded. They wore head-dresses, 18 inches high, of the red tail-feathers of the Sakabula bird. Their breasts were bound with camel-hair, also a Royal distinction, and from the shoulders a 16-foot train of a thin blue material trailed behind them. In their right hands they bore 7-foot-high flowering bulrushes, and altogether made an impressive show.

As they came opposite where Deering and I were standing, a tall, handsome young girl, clad only in the bead belt of the unmarried, but wearing the camel-hair armlets indicating a Royal connection, pushed her way between us, and joined herself to the foremost file of the Queens' procession. She was at once pushed

violently away, and one of the women appointed to keep order rushed up, seized her by the hand, and dragged her off, after administering several blows on her back with her sjambok, which sounded like pistol shots. The two passed through the line of onlookers, close to us, and though the girl's back showed several bleeding weals, her struggles and cries were more of rage than pain, to which, indeed, she seemed indifferent.

While we were still excitedly discussing this interruption to the show, a thin, middle-aged Swazi moved swiftly forward in front of us, looking towards the Queens' procession. Immediately, another of the "order-keepers" rushed up to him, shouting, and dealt him the very devil of a slash on the bare back with his heavy sjambok. The man cringed with the pain and slowly turned round, with the most diabolical look it has ever been my fate to behold. The "order-keeper" dropped his sjambok, turned green with fright and shook from top to toe. "By Jove!" yelled someone near, "he has sjamboked the head medicine man!"

What followed was still more striking, if in a different sense. The whole 12,000 Swazis opposite us, now formed up in companies and regiments, in the style adopted from the British after the Sekukuni affair, marched past the King, giving the Royal salute, with shields and assegais raised and shouts of "Bayete," and then moved off down a gentle slope, chanting a war-song and keeping excellent line and distance. When they had gone some mile and a half, they halted and gave the Swazi war-cry—an ear-piercing whistle, reaching from a very low note to an uncommonly

high one. The effect of this, even at this distance, was most impressive. The 12,000 then raised their shield arms on high, and the whole mass of them turned from black to white and back, with the suddenness of the opening and shutting of a shutter. Deploying across the valley in a line two men deep, they charged back to within 5 yards of the King and saluted once more, and so excellent was their training that the line of 6,000 men did not seem to waver by more than a yard. A mounted induna rode at the head or side of each regiment. As the fighting methods of the Swazis embraced attacks before dawn, I could not help dwelling on the potential mischief of such an army to an unsuspecting white community.

I had grim reason to realise this some weeks later, when on riding from Steynsdorp to Thorburn's hotel one morning, I overtook and accompanied for some distance a highly excited impi of some size. I heard from Thorburn that it had just returned from "eating up" the kraal of an induna, or head-man, whom Mbandine looked upon as growing too powerful to suit him. "Eating up" meant the rooting out of the kraal, lock, stock and barrel, and the killing of every living thing in it: man, woman and child, cattle, horses, etc. It was unusual for kraals to keep dogs or poultry, lest an impi returning from such a raid might be tempted to take this further kraal as an after-snack.

But to return to our First Fruits show. The manoeuvres over, the King's favourite regiment, the Hlavelli, drew up before his throne, just before sunset, stark naked, chanting another hymn, and as the sun

disappeared the whole 400 started off at an orderly run for a certain sacred swamp 50 miles distant. They had to cover the distance, cut a huge stack of bulrushes, and get back by sunrise next morning, and they did it!

These Marathon runners once off, we all, Swazis and whites, after an interval for refreshments, assembled on a slight hill-top near. Here all the unmarried girls were formed up in an oval ring, of a hundred yards or so, three or four deep. The King and his wives were seated at one end of the oval, and some of his children, fine little chaps of five or six, dressed in full warrior kit, did a quaint little war dance, the ring of girls singing a melodious song. A number of whites on horseback surveyed the proceedings from outside the ring of girls, and I was touched and amused to watch how the queen-mothers snatched up and cuddled their respective youngsters when their dance was over.

The head witch-doctor, or medicine man, now stepped into the ring, wearing a leopard skin, and adorned with every fantastic object that could be made to serve as a charm. He had a tall head-dress of Sakabula bird feathers and a huge python skin, at least 16 feet long, hung from his shoulders and trailed on the ground behind him. This weird personage began a *pas seul*, for which the singing changed again. He whirled and he twirled, in true Bedouin fashion, faster and faster, till he had lashed himself into hysterical fury, and then a strange thing happened. It was a dry, cool evening and the ground sandy. As the fellow span round the oval just inside the ring of girls, one of those little tornadoes,

or miniature whirlwinds, known as dust-devils, sprang up behind him, following him, and gaining strength momentarily, till, just as he came, in his gyrations, in front of the King, it enveloped and hid him entirely, and then went up in the air. The whole ring of girls stopped in their singing to give vent to frightened "Wows!" and the rascal sailed out of the dust-storm with a look on his face of: "Look what I can do!" A grizzled old Scotchman, sitting his horse near me, ejaculated, "'Tis just black magic! 'Tis just that! An' A've always maintained the beggars practise it." I tried to suggest that it was the python's tail, whirling in the dust, and the faint breeze blowing that had done the trick, but Scotty would have none of it!

That evening my friend, the humorous Port Elizabeth lawyer, and I took a stroll among the huts of the kraal, each on its little fence-enclosed plot, showing the orderliness of the large village. Seated against one of these fences, we found an ancient Swazi, twanging a melancholy dirge on a one-stringed native fiddle or guitar. We stopped to listen, evidently to the delight of this Swazi Kreisler, till at last my friend took his pipe from his mouth, and apostrophising the artiste, said with a sigh: "You do look a silly old ass, if you only knew it!" At which our native Orpheus smiled more blandly than ever.

At this moment the two of us were pushed violently apart and a young girl, who seemed, from the raw scars on her back, to be the disturber of the morning, thrust her way to the fence, flung a stone the size of her head at an old woman talking earnestly to two men

up against the hut-wall, felling her to the ground, and then, turning with a whoop of triumph, fled away like a deer, the two men raising a hue and cry after her. I called out, "My God! She's killed the woman!" But not a bit! The old girl gathered herself up, wiped the blood from the wound on her forehead, and trotted off after the others. We heard later that this was the woman who had sjamboked the girl in the morning, and that the girl, though a niece of the King's, was taken down to the river that night and drowned for her double flouting of the Royal arrangements.

I threw doubt on this climax then, but wavered in my disbelief when, a week or so later, I heard the most appalling shrieks, close at hand, as I was talking to Thorburn near his hostelry. "Keep still! You can do nothing!" rapped out Thorburn, as I made as if to investigate. "They are killing a woman, caught with a white prospector!" "But this is terrible!" I gasped, as the screams intensified. "What are they doing to her?" "Well," said Thorburn grimly, "the routine is this: two men fling the woman or girl on her back, then each holds up one of her legs by the ankle, and they beat her with knobkerries between her thighs till she is dead." "No wonder the female Swazi has a name for chastity!" I murmured, hastening away from the awful sounds.

Next day, before sun-up, the scene was again set before and around Mbandine's dentist's throne, and the Hlavelli regiment ran in, "according to plan," five abreast, each man carrying a great bundle of bulrushes. The whole body intoned a martial hymn to the vocal accompaniment of the main army drawn

up opposite the King, the Hlavelli filing before the King, and each five dropping their burden of rushes in front of him. So big grew the pile that the last file or two had to spring high to clear it. The indunas and head-men bore all this green stuff away, and built a small kraal with it, at the side of the parade ground, which the King entered at noon, leading a jet-black young bullock, without a white hair on it.

Shortly afterwards, Mbandine reappeared, dressed in bulrushes from top to toe, for all the world like an old English "Jack in the Green" on May Day. He drove the bullock before him down a lane formed by the two halves of the Hlavelli regiment, chanting the most weird and thrilling air I had heard yet during the function. The whole force fell upon the luckless bullock, belabouring it with their bare fists as it bolted, bellowing, down the slope. It was checked, and turned presently and driven back. It collapsed in front of the throne, with the whole regiment dying to get at it. Of course many of the blows would fall on a brother Swazi and give occasion for a side-mill, of which it was amusing to see the bullock take advantage and toss one or two of its tormentors in the air in a last effort. When finally battered to death it was left to the witch-doctor and his assistants for their unholy divination work.

As a mark of respect, a lump of this sacred flesh was sent to Offy Shepstone, and he told me, later, that it was thumped out of all semblance to meat, the fibres being entirely disintegrated.

Later in the day the whole male population was drawn up in rows three deep on the parade ground, and

the King, emerging again from the sacred kraal, with a ball of something unascertainable in his hand, stalked up and down the array, and finally hurled the ball at a selected man in one of the three rows, the whole body keeping up the most lugubrious ditty meanwhile.

The meaning of this old custom was that the King selected a man to bear a message to his Royal ancestors, and that the man struck by this ball, as a mark of dubious regal favour, immediately bolted till overtaken and assegaied by his surrounding and doubtless envious friends.

I had taken occasion to impress on Shepstone that, as there would be white men and even white women present, it would be well if he announced beforehand that there would be no gory business this time. He gave this assurance, and, certainly, there was not even a pretence at stabbing anyone. The man hit by the Royal missile coolly caught it, stepped forward for a long chat with the King, and returned to his place. The King, however, wore so fiendish a scowl that I had "ma doots," and duly heard, on private enquiry, that this man, a wealthy head-man, had also been taken down to the river at night-time, and given his quietus with a knobkerry.

After all, it is indisputable that these native chiefs did exercise full rights of life and death over their subjects, with the entire consent of their whole people, but there does not seem much difference between this and the callousness with which speculators and financiers, great or little, will hand their victims over to ruin, privation and death, in the way of legitimate white business—and in flat defiance of the spirit

and often of the letter of this country's laws and ethics.

The last day was given to packing up and departing, and I was highly intrigued at watching one of the Hlavelli regiment packing his elaborate head-piece into a straw basket, with grass, as carefully as a French or English girl would pack her best hat. These head-dresses are extraordinary and suggest an Egyptian origin. The head-piece proper is of a circular dome shape, with a wedge-shaped ear-flap hanging hinged from each side, and a chignon hinged at the back. The whole is made of the finest grass, as neatly finished as a costly Panama and decorated with Sakabula bird feathers. With the leopard skins, shields, assegais, tails and camel-hair used to complete the warrior's get-up, he would cost £50 as he stood.

Riding into the King's kraal one day, I called at a head-man's, whom I knew and liked, for a chat and a drink of thick milk, that universal native thirst-quencher. As we chatted, I noticed a fine, stalwart young Swazi, in full war-paint, striding towards us up the slope, an attendant driving a handsome roan bullock before him. "Coming to bid for one of your daughters?" I suggested jestingly. "He's been already!" the head-man grumbled. It seemed that the young man had secured the hand of one of his daughters, some six months before, on the usual consideration of ten bullocks. He had brought two to the ceremony, promising to send the balance promptly. Three months later, in reply to strong protests, he had sent an old cow, and now, in answer to threats to take him to the native High Court, there

he was, bringing one fine bullock ; “ and I know,” growled the indignant father, “ that if I trouble him again, or refuse to take this beast in final settlement, he will send my daughter back to me.” “ Oh ! ho ! ” I said, “ is that the way Lobola works out ? ” “ As often as not ! ” muttered the experienced Swazi, his eye on the approaching dodger !

There is a strong vitality and abundant life in these Swazis, and Mbandine, their king, possessed a powerful mentality of no mean order ; a quality shared by all the more prominent African chiefs. He had, of course, been rather overwhelmed by the new conditions in which he found himself, as well as by the unlimited champagne his unexpected wealth had brought him ; but that he regarded all this as more or less “ vanity ” was shown once, when he was lying on a *kaross* letting the piles of sovereigns heaped around him in payment for land concessions trickle through his fingers, and muttering “ What use is all this money to me ? ” Let it be hoped that a beneficent British supervision will enable this fine race to develop successfully after its own genius.

The life of adventure and hard work in this gloriously wild country had toughened my frame to an extent that I am still feeling the benefit of in my eighty-second year. In the Free State I had once, on a railway survey, been in the saddle six hours a day for forty-three days running, so here in the eastern Transvaal my chums and I would often travel on horse or foot from Barberton to the King’s Kraal, Swaziland, in two days, a trip of 100 miles, over hills here and there 4,000–6,000 feet high, in a sub-tropical

climate. "Nothing," as one of these same friends said one day, when we lay gasping for breath after a more than usually rough climb, "would persuade us to make such fools of ourselves, but for the million ahead of it all." Like the boys whose father made them dig up his farm in search of treasure, the only prizes we won were health and experience. The "million" faded away like a rainbow!

I had taken a four-room brick cottage at the mouth of a pretty valley opening on to the larger one of the Komati Goldfields. The Engwenya Mountains, on the Swazi border, across this latter valley, closed in a glorious view, and I had plenty of time, lying smoking in a deck-chair on my deep, creeper-veiled veranda, in the evenings, after a hard day's ride round my various prospective El Dorados, to chew the cud of my fairly varied experiences. Secure in the belief that I was about to retire with a competence, I began to lay plans for recording the lessons I had learned for the benefit of my fellow-man. I wrote a long epic on the fancied last days of the planet "Mercury" and its ultra-civilised inhabitants, a screed in which I incorporated, as a satirical warning, all that I flattered myself I had learned from life on this earth. But in the midst of this effort at higher things came the thundering blow of a cable from London that our Syndicate had collapsed through the failure of a firm in Paris that had underwritten part of the working capital of our first successful flotation. I packed up my literary ambitions once again, to be resumed nearly forty years later, and left for the Rand to enter on a further long series of changes.

I left the Komati Goldfields and Swaziland with feelings of amused affection for the peculiar characters I had met there. There were, for instance, the three Freebooters who, on the ground of some trivial quarrel, fought a triangular duel with rifles, each standing in front of his tent, till one of the three collapsed with a bullet through his thigh. There was the preacher-chemist, who acted as clergyman at funerals, at a fee, and as interpreter—Dutch-English—in the Courts, for a fee also, stopping once on coming to the letters “i.e.” in a document and demanding and obtaining a further fee for translating Latin! There was a nice young Scotch store assistant, whom the lonely life drove to drink and D.T., in the course of which he disappeared, to be found three days later in the bush of a neighbouring hill, stark naked, with a bough in his hand and the statement in his mouth that he must not be interfered with, as he was Jesus Christ and was tending his sheep. There was an ex-captain of a British cavalry regiment, whom three of us, riding by moonlight to Thorburn’s hotel, found standing on the edge of a high cliff near the border, with his two hands uplifted to heaven. As he had evidently been drinking at a carouse then in full swing at Darke’s brilliantly lighted hotel some fifty yards behind him—it being pay day at a neighbouring mine—we rode up to him to know what he thought he was doing. “Hush,” he said solemnly, “I’m catching grapes!” leading the humorist of our trio to remark that “a spot where a late captain of the British Army could stand on the edge of a Swazi precipice, catching grapes by moonlight, was evidently

no place for a parson's daughter, and that we'd better ride on." There were three intoxicated heroes, a bank-teller, a customs collector and a store-keeper, who objected to my method of running a concert I had arranged, and came up threatening a threefold castigation, despite there being ladies present. Thanks to my early training by the boxer, Phil Clair, of Manchester, I was able to assist No. 3 through the window of the artistes' room, followed the others to the billiard-room of the hotel, where the function was being held, knocked No. 1 over the table, and then had 13 rounds with No. 2, after which he expressed a desire to go home. It was a silly business, as they were all three too tight to notice that the business of the evening alone must have kept me sober. But there were fights almost every night at the Barberton Club, one between three doctors at once, and I was lucky to have got off with one scrap only. Then there was the Irish gang who used to go from one development to another, doing no work to speak of, and making themselves such a nuisance that my men rose in a body one day, captured the lot, dragged them one by one through the Komati River at the end of a rope, and threatened that if they came back a big stone would accompany them to the middle of the river and sink them there. There was, to cap the list, a diminutive Scotch tailor with a long, red beard, who was made hopelessly drunk one night, wrapped up in a sheet with his face blackened, screwed up in an empty coffin with the lid aslant, and put in an inside room of the Court-house, to be found next morning by the sergeant, haled before his Worship, black face, white

sheet and all, and fined £2 for "breaking into a Government office." It took some of us half an hour to persuade the jewel of a magistrate that his sentence was as absurd as the "delinquent's" appearance.

There were also some inexperienced highwaymen who desired to relieve me on a lonely bridle-path in Moodie's Hills of the hundred pounds or so cash in my saddle bags (my men's pay for the week, from a bank in Barberton), and were induced, by the threat of my empty pipe-case, to retire some 12 feet down the hill-side to let me ride past. A man I was really sorry for was a miner who worked willingly enough, but drank so much more willingly when he got his pay, that I was compelled at last to sack him. He told me so solemnly that I would soon be sorrier still, when I expressed my regret at turning him off, that I sent the foreman after him to see he did no rioting. My messenger came back, white in the face, with a dynamite cartridge in his hand, and said he had found the d——d fool sitting on his stretcher with this in his mouth, 3 or 4 inches of fuse protruding from it, burning, and a detonator at the business end all right. The foreman had actually had the pluck to pull the fuse out and floor the fellow off the stretcher with a back-hander !

One yarn I must spin as illustrative of the ease with which money was made—and got rid of—in those days. When I left Barberton, *en route* for London in 1887, a miner, evidently very drunk indeed, was helped into the post-cart by a cheering group of comrades as intoxicated as he, and all wishing him luck, envying him, and so forth. One of the lesser drunks whispered

to me that he hoped I and a lawyer, between whom the departing hero was to be seated, would keep an eye on him. "He had just got £5,000 as his share of a lucky strike he and others had made, and the b—— fool was taking it to Cornwall to his old woman, in notes, in a wallet in his inside pocket. We were off before he had ended this story, but it was corroborated by our travelling companion, whose maudlin desire to show us the wallet and notes, in proof, it took us all our time to suppress. We got him to sleep at last, but as we were coming down Laing's Nek that night in a driving storm of rain, I woke up from an uneasy snooze, to find our friend standing up, open wallet in his hand, and scattering bank-notes to the gale, shouting out it was all no use to him. The lawyer on the other side of him was struggling to restrain him and yelled to me to help, and to the driver to pull up. We got the frenzied man quiet at last, and roped him up, I insisting that the legal gent take charge of the wallet till we could hand it and its owner over to the magistrate at the first place we struck that owned one. Meanwhile the lawyer, driver and I went hunting for bank-notes, by a lantern, in as wild a night as could be imagined. We found some, but overcame the driver's wish to keep on looking till daylight, and drove on. It was a very sober and penitent specimen of humanity that we handed over to a magistrate next morning, with a sum that was considerable indeed, but far short of the alleged £5,000. I had to go on with my journey, and know nothing of the outcome of the case, but I heard a report that every cart that passed that spot for a considerable time afterwards stopped

religiously while driver and passengers went treasure-hunting !

When I reached the Rand in the early 'nineties, it was of course a place with a settled and growing industry, and I had to fit myself in. My bridge-building and rough architectural efforts were of no use here as an introduction, and my excursion into politics in connection with the de Winton Commission was only to have its repercussion later. However, I soon got to know my way about, started sharing a house with two Americans, a mining engineer and a mining chemist, and began the business of a mining property agent. Many Free State farmers knew Transvaal ones, whose farms held promises of mineral, but who were at sea as to whom they should take them to. They were often brought to me, and when I held a refusal for a term I generally knew to which mining house to take it.

I remember making £168 in half an hour one afternoon as my share of handing over my refusal of a silver farm, by simply taking it to an office in the next street. This line of business, together with other ventures of which I shall also speak, stood me in good stead for several years, till a new policy adopted by the large mining houses simply put a complete stopper on it. The following account of the matter will show the peculiar ideas of business morality obtaining on the Rand at the time. I had secured a three-months' refusal of a well-placed farm of promise, and had taken it to the mining house dealing in this special line, giving its head a two-months' refusal. As several weeks went by without word, I called again, to be

met by the remark that "there was nothing doing!" Rather annoyed, but knowing my own refusal still had nearly two months to run, I asked for my papers back. They were handed me with a cynical smile and the query "What do you propose to do with them?" I answered that he was not the only pebble on the beach, and I intended to try if the Goldfields or some other houses were less short-sighted than he. He coolly replied: "I would not bother to do that, Hallé! The fact is, all we big houses have determined to do without you middle men. For instance, I know all about the farm you brought me, and have secured a six-months' refusal to start when yours ends six weeks hence, and none of us will deal with you meanwhile." I pointed out that he had only learned of the farm through me, and must have done some dirty work to get behind me, to which he condescended the sole reply that "bizness was bizness!"

A further case in point was in regard to a concession a number of English and American engineers and smaller capitalists in Johannesburg wished to obtain from the Transvaal Government, for smelting concentrates in the American fashion. Cyaniding had not quite passed the experimental stage at the time, and smelting recovered practically the whole of the gold. I was asked to go to Pretoria to work the oracle, owing to my knowledge of Boer official ways. I interviewed Leyds, and secured the services of a very charming, well-connected Hollander lawyer as agent, and between the two of us we obtained a promise from Dr. Leyds that, as State Secretary, he would recommend the concession to the Volksraad, and a

further promise from the leader of the Government section of the Raad that they would support it. We considered that the affair was over bar the shouting. Judge our stupefaction when, on taking our seats on the side of the Raadzaal, we heard Leyds state, when the clerk of the Raad read out our application, that the President and Executive, on considering the matter, had resolved *not* to recommend the application to the Raad. The clerk went on to the next, and our little venture went out like a snuffed candle. When the Raad rose, we met the above-mentioned leader—who had, by the way, been promised by my Hollander friend, without my knowledge, a fat *douceur* if the thing went through—and asked him what was up? He swore he knew nothing, except that Leyds had told him as they went in that our application was “off,” but why, he hadn’t the faintest idea, unless we had withdrawn, in which case he would still expect his *douceur* in return for the trouble he had been put to. We were easily able to show him that we, and not he, were the sufferers by the fiasco, on which he shrugged his shoulders and advised us to see Leyds. I promptly saw that worthy in his office, and was referred by him to Lippert, the financial genius who had wangled the dynamite concession out of the President. He, Leyds, had fully intended us to have our smelting concession, but he had met Lippert at a dinner the evening before, and when chatting over the wine and cigars had been asked by him what was doing, and had answered, “Nothing much; only an English and American group of engineers had asked for a smelting concession for gold concentrates, and the President had said they might have it.” Lippert

had been amazed, and had said that he did not interfere much on the Rand, but this was not a thing to give away in a hurry. "In short," finished Leyds, "I don't know what he has in mind, but I could not go on with the matter, and you'd better see Lippert and try to arrange." Oh yes! I saw Lippert, and asked him if he were thinking of applying for a smelting concession himself that he had prevented our getting it. He was quite civil, and said "No! not at present," but he and his friends were trying experiments and might wish to go into the smelting proposition; at all events, he did not care to have this avenue closed up. He grew positively paternal before he finished, "Look here, Hallé," he said, "you and your friends are quite a decent, clever set of fellows, but when you try to measure yourselves with us big people, who are doing the big things, you are like the earthenware pots that tried to go down the stream with the brazen vessels. I really advise you, for your own good, to do things in a lesser line." I murmured something about "brazen vessels being a very apposite remark," and returned to the Rand.

But a friend of mine had a still worse experience of the sharp practice that passed for fair business on the Rand in those days. He was fairly well-to-do when he went out to South Africa, and having pegged out a considerable stretch of ground on the line of the reef, but some distance away, he prospected it with a diamond drill. He struck coal, not gold, but realising that it might well be the more valuable of the two to the Rand's future, took out the necessary full mining licences, and then offered the whole proposition to one

of the big houses. Its head fully acknowledged the importance of the strike, and said they would send a coal expert over the property. On returning a fortnight later, he was handed his papers back, and asked to draw his pegs from the ground. Demanding the meaning of this outrageous request, it was pointed out to him that the licences he had taken out were for gold, not coal, and that, as there was actually no gold on the property, these were invalid; there was no mention of coal in the gold law. "Well," asked my friend, hotly, "did not that cut them out as well?" "Oh no," he was blandly assured, as soon as their expert had reported that the coal was there, and good at that, they had gone up to Pretoria and got the Volksraad to pass a "Base Metals Act" in a hurry covering coal, and had pegged the ground afresh under the new Act. He was now a trespasser, and would be prosecuted as such unless he drew his pegs immediately! He found he had no remedy!

It was quite hopeless to try to fight a set of wealthy financial houses that had the Volksraad at their disposal to cover up their tracks when they went a little beyond the existing laws. A startling proof of this was given a small group of us on the Rand, when, acting on a hint from an ex-official, we went carefully into the matter of the diagrams of the holdings of the whole body of the Gold-mining Companies on the line of reef, and compared the actual holdings with the extent of ground they were entitled to hold under the claims, licences, mining leases, etc., for which they were paying. We found, as we expected, that the original pegging had been so roughly carried out that

the amount of excess ground held from one end of the field to the other was colossal, and its value, at the then value of £40,000 or so per claim, something stupendous. We proceeded methodically to work, obtained tracings of all these holdings from the Surveyor-General's office, marked on each of them the legitimate holding, worked out the number of claims represented by the excess, and took out the necessary number of prospecting licences entitling us to peg vacant land in the Rand's proclaimed goldfields. Armed with these, and the necessary Powers of Attorney to peg in special names, we proceeded to one end of the field, a formidable body of Syndicate members, miners or prospectors, to measure and peg, and of natives to pitch our tents, look to our Scotch carts, horses, and so forth. We whites were all armed with revolvers, and our natives with hammers, knobkerries, etc. Of course our arriving and commencing operations brought the manager of the great property selected for a start down on us with a posse and violent threats of having us thrown out. We took his wild talk quite coolly, showed him our diagram as proof that we had no intention of trespassing on his legally held ground, nor of allowing him to interfere with our pegging open ground not covered by licence. We also told him not to play the fool! We were too strong to be assaulted with impunity, and he had better ride into Jo'burg and "speak his piece" to his directors.

He took our advice, and we proceeded peacefully with our work. We were, however, a little surprised to find that we were in no way interfered with for several days, though certain directors and others

came out, looked on, and mildly enquired as to our intentions and the grounds they were based on. Of course they protested, but our case was so clear and simple that we laughingly referred them to the law courts.

However, we were to have a further lesson.

We were sitting quietly, smoking and watching our men at work, several days later, having already pegged off several hundred thousand pounds' worth of ground, when a dapper lawyer drove up from Jo'burg, and smilingly presented us with several copies of a special, extraordinary, issue of the *Government Gazette*, Pretoria, of that morning, containing an announcement that "the Government had learned that certain persons were pegging out ground covered by certain diagrams of certain Gold-mining Companies alleged to be in excess of the ground held by the said Companies under licence ; Wherefore the Volksraad, fully acknowledging that the original peggings and drawing of diagrams had frequently been hasty and confused and therefore irregular, but recognising also that any present regulation of the matter, if effecting any alteration of the Companies' holdings, on any large scale, must inevitably lead to the confusing and disturbing of the share markets of the whole world, does now confirm and legalise the whole of the diagrams of the Gold-mining Companies as at the — of the month of — 189—" (the day before we commenced operations). This of course meant that the Raad was violating its own laws and declaring that open ground on a goldfield, duly pegged under licence, was the property, not of the legal pegger,

but of people who had taken illegal possession of it.

However, there was nothing to do but submit. We had no funds wherewith to make a High Court case of it, and even then President Kruger, as he once proved, was capable of placing the Judiciary under the two other elements of every civilised State.

CHAPTER XI

I REALISE MY AMBITION

HERE I was then, doubly knocked out of business ; firstly by the big houses going behind the agents who brought them properties which they could not hear about otherwise, and secondly, by this wholesale condonation of illegal holdings, and prevention of legal pegging of the excess ground thus illegally held.

However, I had again to recognise that there is in reality " a divinity doth shape our ends, rough hew them as we may." This double set-back drove me into journalism, and so in a sense opened up to me the career as a writer that had always been my ambition. I came to journalism rather strangely. After this double misadventure, I made use of my engineering experience to accept a request from an old friend that I would go out to his farm just beyond Hospital hill, and ascertain why his water supply was falling off, and whether it could be restored ; his blue-gum plantations were withering and his market gardening was threatened. I made the important discovery that the whole water supply north of the Hospital hill ridge was nothing but a huge shale " sponge," which contained the sub-surface seepage of the land lying northward half-way to Pretoria. The granite cropped out to the surface hereabouts, and sloped downwards till broken

across by the Hospital hill dyke, the rainfall soaking down to this granite and forming an underground reservoir, which the blue-gum plantations were gradually exhausting.

While on this farm I continued to write to the Press, as I had commenced to do while in Johannesburg. I had, *inter alia*, written a series of articles on the African goldfields for a St. Louis magazine, for which I drew 25 dollars an article, till the magazine bucked at my intimation that the gold industry of South Africa was still in its infancy, and was likely to reach a hoary old age. I had also written political articles for a weekly called *The Burlesque*, a mining-camp affair, started by Henry Hess.

My observations of the social, industrial and political position in the Transvaal, in fact in all South Africa, had led me to anticipate serious trouble between the newer and older populations of the Transvaal, with repercussions throughout South Africa, with probably equal trouble between the general body of this new population and the mining financial groups, whose interests were by no means necessarily those of the general body of these "Uitlanders" as they were beginning to be called.

I had drawn the attention of Hess and a shrewd old speculator named Lowenthal, then supporting him, to the opportunity that offered for a powerful independent weekly, running an Uitlander political policy, and scathing the flagrant administrative scandals of the Kruger or Boer régime, and the equally notorious social and financial abuses of the mining and financial groups then enjoying a stranglehold on this general

Uitlander body and exercising anything but a beneficial influence on the Pretoria governing oligarchy.

My advice was taken, and the new weekly *The Critic* appeared with an article by myself, "Aux Armes, Citoyens!" This article called on all "Uitlanders" to rise and stand for their rights, not by arms, but by every constitutional means by which we, the newer community, already equalling the older in number, paying 98 per cent. of the country's taxation, and running practically the whole of its material and cultural progress, could bring that older section to grant us the equal rights as citizens, due to us as immigrants freely accepted by this land of our adoption. The paper took like hot cakes, and speedily grew to 80 pages, more than half advertisements, with a circulation from end to end of the fields gradually extending over South Africa. Hess's fearless attack on Government abuses, including one on a judge whom he forced to resign; articles by an excellent staff, and my ding-dong advocacy of the Uitlander cause, as well as my short stories on patent social and mining scandals, and other features, soon made *The Critic* a power in the land. It was largely instrumental in the formation of the Uitlander National Union, whose activities on behalf of the newer population attracted increasing attention throughout South Africa and Governmental and Parliamentary circles in England. The mining and financial houses themselves presently recognised that their interests would be better served by popular reform than by bolstering up a Kruger régime which, despite all spoon-feeding on their part, was grinding

the faces of themselves, the rich, far more villainously than those of the Uitlander poor. The prospect of the Uitlander agitation ultimately hammering down Paul Kruger's granite resistance seemed at last so favourable, that Hess left for London to start a home edition of *The Critic* after placing me in charge in Johannesburg.

We were very shortly able to score heavily, both in South Africa and London. The Transvaal Government started a war, "the Malaboch campaign," against a semi-independent chief, and made the initial blunder of trying to commandeer Uitlanders as well as burghers for military service. They found it wise to withdraw before the attitude of the miners, but gave the Uitlander Press the opportunity to flay them for this attempt to treat the newer population as helots. Of this opportunity *The Critic* also made full use, but when the Transvaal forces beat the unfortunate tribe into surrender, by dynamiting the roofs of their caves upon them during an armistice, and then drove them all, men, women and children, through the land out into the Kalahari Desert, under circumstances of peculiar barbarity, I wrote an article under the caption "The March Dolorous," exposing the whole episode, and Hess secured its reproduction in the London *Times* over my name, with a short introduction, giving my Free State and Swazi experience, together with my father's name as warrant of good faith and respectability as an authority. *The Times* commented on the whole story in anything but a style calculated to please Paul Kruger! Owing to the impartial manner in which Hess and I castigated capitalistic and govern-

mental abuses, the magnates' sycophants, both in the Press and literature, had studiously ignored the two of us. It is, however, indisputable that it was *The Critic* which started the Uitlander movement and contributed mainly to its success until the magnates, by collaring the "National Union" and intriguing with Cecil Rhodes, brought the whole movement down with a run by their inane Reform Movement and its "Raid."

It was in the year 1895, while I was Transvaal Editor of *The Critic*, that my father and stepmother, Sir Charles and Lady Hallé, made a most successful musical tour of South Africa. It was a curious experience, criticising one's own parents in one's own columns! As Lady Hallé had told me she had never read a single newspaper critique in her life, I contented myself with retailing what Joachim had said to her, when she went and asked him, on her first husband's becoming a hopeless invalid, whether he thought her playing good enough to make much money by: "You go to England! I have always made more there than anywhere else, and when they have heard you they will not want to hear me again!" A most chivalrous gentleman! I pleased my father, who was then seventy-six, and whose playing had softened down, by quoting Longfellow's charming lines on the moonlight being more tender and lovely than the garish, if powerful, sun at midday.

One incident of their stay in Johannesburg amused me. One of the magnates gave a lunch and afternoon reception in their honour, attended by all the Rand's bigwigs, and as we three drove away later I told my stepmother that, at a moderate computation, the

bunch of women that had crowded round her at the latter ceremony must have been worth $27\frac{1}{2}$ millions. "Oh," she snorted, "I wish they had had twenty-seven and a half ounces of brains. One after the other asked me, 'How do you like Johannesburg?' till I lost my temper and told them that if they would take the dust off and let me see it, I might tell them. 'Oh,' said one, 'we think it equal to any capital in Europe!' 'Well,' I replied," said Lady Hallé, "'I know all the capitals in Europe, great and small, and would not compare Johannesburg with the smallest!' at which they looked very peevish!"

Pretoria struck them very differently. The head of the firm of Beckett & Co. gave a banquet in their honour when they went over to play there, and Lady Hallé was quite enthusiastic when we drove away. "There!" she said, "that is quite different from Johannesburg! What with the judges, lawyers, the professors, heads of Government Departments, and the foreign Consuls, and all their cultured wives, one could chat reasonably. This was really like a small European capital!"

An interesting story of dogged perseverance in pursuit of a fixed idea is that of the little Jew store-keeper on the Rand, who was so firmly convinced of the inevitable fortune lying in deep levels, that when this branch of gold-mining was still regarded as more than doubtful, he laid out every penny he and his wife made at their store, in pegging out deep-level claims at one end of the line of reef, and acquiring and holding long options on others. In the end he held or controlled a formidable block of ground below

well-proved companies. Meanwhile, he and his missus lived as barely as old Mother Hubbard, her hubby and their dog.

Later on, as the result of a small sale of ground, he took an office in Johannesburg, opposite mine, but was still so cautious of expense that he used to come in to read my morning paper. At last he burst in one day, hardly able to speak for excitement, and gasped out: "Hallé! I 'av' jus' make £68,000! Come and 'av' a cup of bif-tea!" Of course, I congratulated him warmly and went with him to a neighbouring bar, to celebrate the occasion, though it evidently cut him to the quick to hear me say I would have a whisky-and-soda.

He eventually made a large fortune at his deep-level game and departed for that Mecca of his tribe, London. A friend of mine visiting him at his gorgeous West-End address, during a business trip to the metropolis, was shown into a sumptuously appointed smoking-room, by a most episcopal-looking butler, fetched by a minor slave in a blazing livery. Our deep-level magnate in shirt-sleeves was asleep in an arm-chair at 11 a.m.! He greeted my friend as a long-lost brother, and told the butler to bring smokes and drinks. "Three glasses," he said, and insisted on it when the domestic hesitated. "Are you expecting someone?" asked my friend. "Shall I come again?" "No!" replied his host with a snort, "dere is none to expect," and he proceeded to explain that his life was so lonely that he always asked the butler to join him in a smoke and drink and for a chat in the morning. "You do not mind his sitting

down with us? He is quite a good fellow!" My friend said, "Of course not," and found that the "man," when he had lost his look of embarrassment, was better informed than the "master."

Mrs. "Deep-level" had meanwhile got herself into quaint trouble. Price being now no matter, she had put herself into the hands of a carriage seller, and ordered the most costly and elaborate carriage and pair he could supply! Also asking him as a favour to get her two suitable gee-gees with harness to match, and a coachman and man-servant, with something special in the way of liveries. The fellow must either have been a humorist, or reckless as to how he earned a questionable penny, because the outcome of the order was that when she drove out one day in her new silver-mounted go-cart, like a true Mrs. Solomon in glory, she was pleased to see the general public stop and stare, and police and soldiers even stop and salute. She was hardly so gratified when, on rolling into Hyde Park, a mounted policeman shouted to her coachman to stop, and riding to her carriage door and saluting civilly asked her name and address. On hearing it, he changed his tone and enquired, dryly enough, "how it came that her men were wearing the Royal livery." There they sat, grinning, in a scarlet hardly as bright as that on her old cheeks, as she protested her ignorance and how she had been had! If not of Royal blood, she was at all events in a right Royal rage, when, in obedience to the mounted man's sharp orders, she had to drive home at once, make her men discard their get-up, and see that she never offended again.

The poor old couple, with all their wealth, were like lonely fish out of water in London, and realised, like many of their "new-rich" fellows, that, while it is a truism that all that glitters is not gold, it is still more painfully true that even the finest gold is often uncommonly dull!

Unfortunately, the mining and financial houses on the Rand could not let well alone. The Uitlander movement was doing excellently, and forcing a wholesome, if reluctant, respect from even the pro-Krugerites of the Cape, the Free State and Natal, though there were few enough in the last-named colony—except the Governor! The great houses, however, seemed determined that if there was to be a change in the political position in the Transvaal it should be they, and not the general Uitlander body, who were to bring it about and reap the main advantage from it! To this end they entered or were inveigled into a secret conspiracy with Cecil Rhodes, whose lieutenant and right-hand man, Dr. Jameson, had just "kraaled" Paul Kruger's ambitions in the north by the annexation of Matabeleland. Anything more stupidly conceived or more blunderingly carried out than this same conspiracy could not be found in the whole library of "Prisoner of Zenda" fiction. The "chief conspirators" in Johannesburg were mere puppets in the hands of Cecil Rhodes. Was he not the piper who paid, as well as played the tune? They only let a selected few into the secrets of their aims and how they meant to secure them. This, however, mattered little, as the said secrets had a marvellous way of getting themselves known despite the stringency of

the oaths under which they were confided to the initiated. For obvious reasons I was by no means a *persona grata* with the leading financial houses. Still, the "conspirators" seriously desired the support of so influential a paper as *The Critic*. An attempt was made therefore to smuggle an article into its columns, through a contributor, which was so full of veiled hints as to a coming inevitable revolution that I told this individual bluntly that any fool could tell that something serious was in the wind, but that I was not the brand of fool to help it in a paper for which I was responsible, unless told all about it, and then I would exercise my own discretion whether to aid it or balk it. When he lost his temper, and told me the thing had gone too far and grown too big for me, or anyone else, to stop it, I told him to get out and take his article with him. I had thought at first that the big houses were talking of getting arms and supplies in, in case it might be necessary to back our National movement for our rights by a show of force, and if he could prove to me that all this talk was simply in support of the National Union movement, I would support it gladly enough; but this idea of bringing Jameson in with a few hundred men and hoisting the Union Jack was all blithering nonsense. An internal revolution was one thing, and no one could interfere with it from outside; but to bring in Jameson with Rhodes's men and pull down the Transvaal flag would make it an international question at once, and set France and Germany buzzing about our ears. I asked him to see what the Americans on the Rand thought about it! I wound up by telling him that I

would not only keep on cracking up the National Union movement, as on the point of succeeding, but write that I devoutly hoped there was nothing in all these silly rumours about help from outside. As this must remain a purely internal movement, unity of effort was indispensable, and outside people coming in would simply split the camp.

As a matter of fact, it was the plain and robust intimation from the Rand Americans that they would have nothing to do with the thing if Jameson did come in that sent Charles Leonard, Chairman of the National Union, post-haste to Cape Town to tell Rhodes that Jameson must not come in on any account. As everyone knows, it proved impossible to stop the affair, and although Rhodes informed his impetuous lieutenant that the whole thing was "off" and he definitely out of it, Jameson crossed the border with his absurdly tiny force, was led into a trap, defeated and captured, and taken to Pretoria with his whole expedition.

A few personal reminiscences should be conclusive as to its woefully inefficient preparation and total mismanagement. For instance, I was then unmarried, and boarding at Heath's hotel. One of the chief agents of the conspiracy was a constant visitor at the hotel, and used to tell us quite openly in the bar-room after dinner how he was getting on with his job of stocking certain stores on Jameson's line of march from the border to the Rand with provisions for his men. I warned him that there were Germans and Hollanders present, known to be Krugerites, and that they were probably taking all they heard to Pretoria.

I was pooh-poohed, but one of these gentry told me afterwards that I was quite right! He had reported everything he heard, and the proof of the pudding was in the eating, in that the Boers stripped these stores of all they had, and Jameson's men found the cupboard as bare as Mother Hubbard found hers.

While there was this carelessness as to leakage of news on the one hand, information as to the intention to bring Jameson in was so scrupulously withheld from the general public that on the morning on which the misguided doctor came in, I was standing in Commissioner Street near the Rand Club, with Mr. Hancock, the Mayor of Johannesburg, when a body of men in khaki, mounted and with rifles slung at their backs, clattered past. "What in the world are these, Hallé?" he exclaimed. "Well," I explained, "they are part of the forces of the Revolution some of the people of our big houses have got up. Haven't you heard that Doctor Jim is across the border, making for the Rand, and that the fat is in the fire?" "My God! What is all this, and I haven't been told a word. I must call the Town Council together at once," and he hurried off. Neither Mayor nor Council showed up particularly prominently in the confused events that followed, but the whole of that day saw imposing masses of men marching in to the Goldfields offices, where the Reform Committee, which had now to come out in the open, with a full list of names, had its headquarters, and marching back, with the rifles served out to them, something like ten rifles to every hundred men! It was a popular

enough movement ! Were not the miners paid £1 a day to take part in it ?

An incident occurred almost immediately on Jameson's crossing the border which, "if" it had materialised as proposed, might have changed the whole subsequent course of this sub-continent's history. Two tall, gaunt Americans stalked into the office of the editor of a well-known Johannesburg weekly, on the morning that the whole town was feverishly awaiting news of the progress of the Raiders, and of any counter-action Oom Paul might be preparing. They said they had taken part in some thirteen South American revolutions, and would like to take a hand in this South African one. They were working on the railways, and had heard that an ammunition train was coming down from Pretoria at noon, and was to be passed on to Krugersdorp without delay. "Waal ! They knew of a railway culvert just outside the Johannesburg station, on the Krugersdorp line, which a few dandy sticks of dynamite, applied they knew where, would place out of action for three weeks ; pulverise ! " And they sure had the dynamite and fixings. Asked why they did not get to work and do it, they replied that they wanted a word of authority first from the big bugs of the movement. If he, the editor, would see Colonel Rhodes and tell them he approved, that would be enough for them.

The editor went off to the Goldfields office, that had been "requisitioned" by the Reformers, and saw the Colonel, who went upstairs to where the Reform Committee was sitting in permanent session, and returned presently, flung his cap on the table, and

remarked gruffly that the "Committee could not authorise the destruction of Government property!" A bewildered editor returned to his office and grimly informed the Yankees of the result of his mission. They took it coolly. "Come along, Bill," said one. "I thought so. This push couldn't run a strike in a girls' school! Mustn't destroy Government property! And call themselves a revolution!"

The train-load of ammunition went through, and was used to shoot up Jameson's bunch of unfortunate would-be heroes. I was the editor in question.

But I was to have the farcical nature of the whole show exposed still more flagrantly for me. I had had a duel in *The Critic* with one George Meyer, a field cornet of an area south of the Rand, and this gentleman now sent me in a message that when he brought his commando in, *The Critic* offices would be the first building he would blow up with all in it. I promptly went off and told Colonel Rhodes, saying there were about one hundred bachelors living in the building, that I had seen most of them and that if he, Colonel Rhodes, would let us have one hundred rifles and ammunition, we would make a bit of a show. To my amazement he replied coolly, "My dear chap, I haven't got them to give you!" I asked what he meant, and he gave me his word that all the weapons they had been able to get in were 2,750 rifles and 5 machine guns, and these were distributed among posts commanding the main roads into Johannesburg, manned by seasoned old soldiers. "Why," he ended, "the twelve men on guard downstairs hand over their rifles when changing guard." "But," I

gasped, "you never started a revolution against fifty thousand and more Boers armed with artillery, with less than three thousand rifles and five machine guns!" He shrugged his shoulders. "Jameson came in a fortnight too soon!" "So we are all in the soup!" I muttered, staring at him; "what do you suppose they will do to us?" "God knows how it will all pan out in the end," he said, scratching his chin; "London disclaimed Jameson as soon as it heard he had started, and cabled him to go back, and Sir Hercules has been ordered to Pretoria; so that if we don't play the fool, the town should come out all right. We of the Committee are bound to catch it stiffly, though." I shook my head. "You don't know the Boer as I do! It will be a case of touch and go for all of us!" And neither of us felt particularly comfortable.

Next morning was Friday and *The Critic* already in the press, when I heard very early of Jameson's defeat and capture. My leading article was an appeal to everyone to keep cool and await developments of a confused situation. This was of course unprofitable now the raid had proved a fiasco, so I stopped my paper's issue, wrote a short dodger to the effect that the Jameson disaster must prove a great set-back to our whole Uitlander movement for our rights, but that, as British people, we would know how to stand up against temporary failure, and keep on steadily! "Our cause was as irresistible as the tide of the sea, and must prevail!"

I sent the paper out as an extra large issue with this dodger inserted in each copy, and went back to my

office. Within half an hour Colonel Rhodes's adjutant arrived post-haste in a Cape-cart, to fetch me to the Reform Committee, then in permanent session.

King, the Chairman, shook me warmly by the hand for my dodger, and wished to know if I would let the Committee have 5,000 copies, with *The Critic* and the date at the head, in half an hour. He explained that they had agreed to surrender, but that many of the men in the various camps had refused to do so, and wanted to make a fight of it. The Committee wished to nail these dodgers up in all the camps, and plaster them all over the town and mines, to steady the people. Of course I said it could and would be done, and my friend the adjutant bowled me down to the printing works, where the thing was still set up, and in less than half an hour he was able to take the major part of the order back to the Goldfields, whence it was at once distributed. Of course the story of this dodger has been scrupulously ignored by the magnates' defenders in press and books, but Colonel Rhodes told me later that they all believed that this "sturdy dodger" saved a very ugly situation, as the least show of bravado might have roused the Boers to the attack on the town for which many of them were clamouring. There were 8,000 armed Boers already round the Rand and Johannesburg, and the tensivity of the position may be judged from the fact that Kruger refused to believe there were only 2,750 rifles in town and laughed at our five machine guns. A 6-inch gun, he said, had been seen at the water-works commanding the fort or prison on Hospital hill. This was really an iron water-pipe the captain of that post had hoisted

on the front wheels of a wagon to scare a company of German ex-soldiers, collected by Captain von Brandis, and sent to the fort to dig trenches.

It scared them away all right ! As a proof that it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, it must be mentioned that there was a general gaol clearance, and many a convict, present or potential, was returned to the bosom of the community. The height of comedy was, however, reached a few evenings later, when Lieutenant Petersen, of the police, swept the members of the Reform Committee away to Pretoria for trial. The boarders at Heath's hotel had dined earlier than usual, as the "Australian Brigade" was giving a banquet in celebration of a "glorious victory," which existed only in their own imagination. We ordinary boarders were consoling each other in the bar for the wretchedness of the whole sorry business, when we heard a clatter of hoofs and clash of arms in the street. A man darted in saying it was a squad of mounted police, sixteen of them, and a victoria, with Lieutenant Petersen, and he had come for Hayes Hammond, one of the leaders of the Committee. Heath took him upstairs, and he came down again presently with Hammond, the latter carrying a portmanteau and a rug. The two entered the victoria, a sharp order rang out, and the cavalcade departed in the rain at a trot, just as our Australian friends in the dining-room were bellowing out to the universe that "Britons never, never, never, shall be slaves !"

While the Reform Committee were tasting all the horrors of a Transvaal prison in Pretoria, gloomily

chewing the cud of the fact that they had, as one of their legal members put it to me, "apparently broken every single law in the whole Statute Book of the Transvaal," Mr. (later Sir) Otto Beit, then local head of the house of Eckstein, and representative of Messrs. Wernher, Beit, of London, asked me to call on him, and in the privacy of the Eckstein managerial office unfolded to me a grandiose scheme for continuing that struggle for the rights of the Uitlander which had been interrupted by the Jameson blunder. Armed revolution, even when assisted from outside, was now out of the question, if it had ever been in it. The fight must be kept up, he said, through the Press! I, he assured me, had evidently the threads of the whole situation at my finger ends, and I had the ear of the public. What was wanted was a daily paper which would be to South Africa what the London *Times* was to England. They would supply the funds needed to start it, and £40,000 a year to establish it, and I would be made permanent Editor, to run the policy on which I was running *The Critic* at a salary and share interest in keeping with the whole design of the venture. To show that it was a genuine, popular, public venture, he asked me to get as many shares taken up outside the Reform Committee ring, in fact from the general public, as possible, and he wound up by handing me a cheque for £2,000 for preliminary expenses. He gave me also a Pass he had wangled for me to go and see the five chief Reform prisoners in the cottage in Pretoria in which they were detained for trial, whenever I liked. I went up several times and interviewed Lionel Phillips, Colonel Rhodes, and the others frequently,

and planned out the paper required. I even made an initial start, and ran the paper for six months, placing it, by then, on a paying basis. I raised £17,000 for 17,000 shares, over and above the Beit shares, and then the blow fell! Kruger got wind of the scheme. He reminded the Reform Committee of their undertaking, when pardoned, not to meddle in politics for three years, and intimated that Press activities were taboo, under penalty of the confiscation of all they held in the Transvaal. It was made of general application, and of course killed the thing stone dead.

Two little incidents in connection with this abortive venture are significant of the mentality of the "great financiers" of this period. The one concerns Barney Barnato. I called on him to tell him about this proposal of Otto Beit's, and asked him to what extent he would support it. He handed me a cheque for £500 and said the scheme was all right, it would keep the game going. "But you think you will run an independent paper, Hallé?" he continued. "Well, you go and make the paper a success, den I come along and buy up de shares, and den you write as I tell you to do!" "You won't buy my shares!" I said with a grin, pocketing his cheque. "Well, we will see," quoth he, "it all depends on the price."

The other incident occurred when Beit went back to London and "Fricky" Eckstein took over the helm at the Corner House. I went to see him, and found him in a terrible rage at what Beit had done in the matter. "We have just pulled through one piece of nonsense," he raved, "and here we are to begin another! I tell you Otto Beit is a b——f——!" I

did not think this promising, but Beit had been in charge, and I did not see how Fricky could draw back, so I bluffed, "Well, Mr. Eckstein, I did not come here to be told which of the directors of Ecksteins were b—— f——s and which not, but to hear how one of them was going to carry on the undertaking of his predecessor." He glared and said he did not yet know how it would be possible. He must "wait and see" how Kruger proposed to take it! And he proved right, as I have explained. Kruger, in familiar parlance, put the tin hat on it by his threat of confiscation. I pointed out in vain that a newspaper was not a rebellion, and that there was liberty of the Press in the Transvaal. I was solemnly informed that no further help would be forthcoming, and the paper was as solemnly closed down by its imposing body of directors.

The fact was, of course, that Beit was one of the few "brass hats" of the mining industry who cared a rap for the interests of the general Uitlander body, and the rest thought themselves quite capable of looking after their own financial interests. The collapse of the "Reform" movement, and its Raid, had also cost them too much for them not to be chary of any other political essay.

A peculiar feature of this Raid business was how much more was known of it, in advance, in London than in Johannesburg. A few nights before Jameson came over, a big public dinner was held in Johannesburg at which Mr. Lionel Phillips made an uncommonly strong speech, which, without exactly giving the show away, said plainly that the sands were run-

ning out, the patience of the newer population was exhausted, and the Transvaal Government would do well to note the signs of the times and alter their ways before too late. Melton Prior, the distinguished war correspondent, whose presence had taken me by surprise, and convinced me that things had gone much farther than I had even yet believed, made no bones about the whole affair. He was sitting near me, and on the strength of knowing my brother, the painter, at home, told me plainly that he had come out to be in at the death, and was quite annoyed that I would not tell him openly when the fun was to commence. How could I, when the leaders of the whole business did not know it themselves? They did not expect Jameson to move for weeks yet, were still waiting for rifles, etc., and were already beginning to wonder whether the whole thing was not a colossal blunder, now that the Americans were kicking against Rhodes having a finger in the pie and wanting to hoist the Union Jack. However, friend Prior spoke his piece, and kindly told the assembled company, among whom there were doubtless Krugerites galore, that he had come out to follow our drums and rifles, and wished us every good luck when the bullets began to fly.

The next time I saw this enterprising gentleman was on his return from Pretoria after the bubble had burst, and the Reform Committee had been safely put away in pickle. He, like Winston Churchill, had been so surprised to find the Boer leaders dressed like well-to-do Londoners, and not attired in sheepskins, and positively able to talk decent English, that he greeted

me with the frenzied remark that the Randites were a set of thieves and murderers, and deserved to be shot off to a man! I asked him if he did not know that every brick of the fine buildings he had seen in Pretoria, and every bullet fired against poor Dr. Jim and his men, had been paid for by the Uitlander's 98 per cent. of the taxation, after having saved the country from bankruptcy; told him not to talk of things he did not understand, and that he was just an ignorant pro-Boer who could not see an inch before his nose, like all the rest of them—on which exchange of compliments we stood each other drinks!

The wickedness of this whole Cecil Rhodes-cum-Mining magnates' conspiracy was that anyone with a schoolboy's knowledge of the Boer of the two Republics, and the Dutch of the rest of South Africa, must have known it was doomed to be a ghastly failure, and could only result in blowing our legitimate general Uitlanders' agitation for mere ordinary civil and political rights sky high. Every friend of the Transvaal in South Africa, even enlightened Abraham Fischer of the Free State, jumped at the opportunity of d——ing that same Uitlander movement which they had had to confess reluctantly, just before the Raid, as having something in it. As things were, those of us Uitlanders who were not wholly discouraged at finding ourselves out of the Kruger frying-pan into the fire of this woeful magnate "revolution" had to set to work to pick up the pieces of our wrecked agitation, and here again we were to come up against more blundering in London,

which, though it came out all right in the end, almost lost South Africa to the Empire.

I was doing free-lance journalistic work a few years after the Raid, the magnates of the Reform movement having let me down flat with their usual cheerful ruthlessness, when I heard that a new editor was coming out from London for *The Star* and that the circumstances were a little peculiar. As I was at the time writing "leaders" for this Johannesburg evening paper, among other things, I was naturally a little intrigued as to the personality and intentions of this new-comer. I was not long in discovering. After a few days, Mr. Monypenny, as *The Star's* new brass hat was called, wrote me asking me to see him at his office. I found a tall, slight, refined-looking man, who proceeded at once to business. He was good enough to say that he had looked through a number of my leading articles, and found them to be well written and disclosing both an intimate knowledge of South African affairs and a gratifying Imperial spirit. He would be glad if I would keep on in charge of the South African political activities of the paper, and he could tell me confidentially that I was at liberty to write as strongly, even luridly, against the Transvaal Government as I liked, as long as I had grounds for it. My identity would be kept secret, and I need not fear any financial responsibility for libel or other actions that might be brought against the paper on account of anything I might write. All such responsibility would be covered. He was evidently thoroughly in earnest, so after a pause I replied, "Well, Mr. Monypenny, this is a grave proposition; how grave,

I am afraid that you, as a new-comer to South Africa, may not realise. I have heard that you, as editor of *The Star*, are receiving £1,500 a year from the proprietors, the Argus Company, and another £1,500 a year from a London political syndicate ; also that you were, before coming here, connected with the Colonial Branch of the Editorial Department of the *London Times*." "We need not go into what I am, or am not," he interjected. "No," I continued, "I have merely repeated what I have heard, because what you have said to me can only mean that a regular Press campaign is to be initiated against the Transvaal Government, supported from London, and that I am honoured by an invitation to lead it here, on the strength of my knowledge of the Boer of the two Republics. Now, I must tell you plainly that this means war, and before I accept, I must know clearly whether London intends to prepare for war?" "War?" said Monypenny, incredulously, "there will be no war! Kruger will give in! You don't know what I bring with me from London!" "It's not what you bring with you from London, but what you find here," I retorted. "You were pleased to say that you believed I understood the position out here, and I must again tell you plainly that this means war. The first Boer War showed that the Transvaal is not to be intimidated, and Majuba has made all the Boers in both Republics swelled-headed. They will fight in any case rather than give in, and if they understand this new line of attack to be merely bounce, without military preparation behind it, they will probably start war themselves, as they did in the 'eighties. You

must remember that Kruger is thoroughly informed of all that goes on in London, where there are more pro-Boers than there are out here." "Well, Mr. Hallé," said Monypenny, "I cannot accept your view of the position. I am informed otherwise. The point is, that I have offered you work of a kind you can handle, and the pay, I need not tell you, will be good. The question is, Will you undertake it?" "Well, I am afraid I must ask you for three days to consider the matter," I said, rising. "Certainly," replied Monypenny, "and I hope you will accept. I can see we would work together all right."

At the end of my three days' grace, I told him I could not accept the responsibility for what such a Press campaign, without military preparation, might lead to, and must decline his offer. We parted good friends, and I resumed the editorship of *The Critic*, pushing the Uitlander cause more strongly than ever, and fiercely rebutting the idea that the general newer population were responsible for the "Reform Committee's" movement and its Raid, or should be punished for it by losing the sympathies of the Home or South African intelligentsia. I was interested a little later to hear that a leading Transvaal Dutch lawyer had attacked Monypenny in his office, and done him some slight damage before his staff interfered; the ground for the assault being given as this very Press campaign now being carried on by *The Star*. I was further intrigued by hearing from Monypenny, when I met him in the Durban Club after the Relief of Ladysmith, where he had shared the siege, that six months after our conversation in *The Star* office, and

my refusal to take part in the proposed campaign, he had written to his London principals in exactly the strain of my warning to him, and that they had replied pooh-poohing his warnings exactly as he had pooh-poohed mine !

As everyone knows, Mr. Chamberlain persisted in pressing the Transvaal Government to grant the general Uitlander the franchise, and even sent out Sir Alfred Milner, as Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner, to negotiate. He did not obtain more, at the Conference held at Bloemfontein, than an offer from Kruger of a qualified franchise after fourteen years' residence, an offer sternly refused as inadequate. This, as I had anticipated, led to the Transvaal precipitating a war for which the Boers had prepared themselves so thoroughly that only their own inexperience, coupled with the treachery of their own people and agents, failed to gain their declared object, the freeing of South Africa from "the yoke of England," and even the presence of the Uitlander on their sacred soil. The British Government was, as usual, caught napping ; it had about a fifth of the fighting force in South Africa of its enemy, and was further handicapped by the secret and often open hostility of the Dutch of the Cape and the pro-Boers of Natal.

As an example of the hostility of even foremost Dutch of the Cape Colony, I may tell how Schreiner, then Premier of the Cape Colony, made a public speech about this time, declaring that there was no such thing as a declaration of suzerainty on the part of Great Britain over the whole of South Africa in any of

the existing Conventions. *The Critic* was accustomed to present a cake, each week, to anyone in South Africa, or abroad, who had made a particular fool of himself the previous week. I promptly donated a cake to Mr. Premier Schreiner, assuring him that "just as this was a plum cake, although there was not a plum in it, so would he find the Conventions constituted a very real suzerainty, even if the word 'suzerainty' did not occur in them." He took the quip in good part, and wired to know when the cake would reach Cape Town. It was always a rich and handsome article, and I wired back that it would be sent off as soon as it had completed its week's appearance in Quinn & Co's window.

To show the "brilliance" with which the Home Government worked its Intelligence Department at the time, I was asked by Otto Beit, then still in Johannesburg, to see him about certain information I had stated in *The Critic* to be in my possession. I must explain that several of my former Free State official comrades had joined the Transvaal Civil Service, and that some of them, foreseeing a clash between Paul Kruger and Great Britain, used to feed me secretly with information as to the Transvaal's military preparations. Kruger had, in fact, commenced to arm for war immediately after the suppression of the Raid, explaining that it was a precaution against another possible Rand Revolution. This was like buying a machine gun as a protection against fleas. We were quite defenceless and unorganised, and the heavy guns he mounted at the Jo'burg Fort could have levelled the town to the ground in half a day, if by

some piece of foolishness they had not been so put up that they could not be depressed to hit anything nearer than three miles south of the line of reef! I had received from one of my former chums, evidently on the look out for a friend at Court if things went awry, a flimsy copy of a large order for light and heavy artillery lately despatched from Pretoria to the Creuzot Works, France, and I had challenged the Government to deny that such an order had been sent off.

Beit wished to see my copy, and on my showing it to him, told me that a certain Colonel —— was then in Johannesburg from the War Office, to enquire into the extent to which Kruger was arming. He asked me to see this military gentleman secretly. He was staying at Heath's hotel, under the name of Mr. Brown, of London. As I was still boarding at Heath's, there was no difficulty in our meeting, though Mr. Brown's elaborate precautions against our raising suspicions would have aroused the curiosity of a barn-door owl, a dead one for preference. I was to approach a small gentleman looking out of the centre window in the reading-room, whisper the magic word "Brown," and on receiving an affirmative nod was to follow this personage, who had regular officer written all over him, to his room upstairs, keeping a three yards' distance. Arrived there, he locked the door after a prolonged gaze up and down the passage, produced some excellent cigars and whisky, and demanded a sight of the incriminating documents. I produced the sheets of flimsy, one mass of detailed measurements of all sorts and sizes, bores and lengths of gun, and

said that his expert knowledge would tell him if the order were or were not genuinely what it purported to be. He cast an eye over the lists and said they were undoubtedly a genuine order and of very good stuff. He then asked whether this were the full list of guns Kruger was importing. That, I told him, I could not say. I only knew that this order, of some scores of guns, big and little, had been despatched on such and such a date. He expressed himself greatly disappointed. He had been given to understand that I had a complete list of the Transvaal armaments. He persisted in this so doggedly that, at last, I lost my temper. "I can tell you how to get the full list you want," I said quietly. "Yes?" he answered eagerly. "Take the train to Pretoria, then a cab to the Artillery Barracks, ask for the Chief Officer, tell him you are Colonel — from the London War Office sent out to get a complete list of the Transvaal's armaments, and ask him to let you have it." "But he would not give it me," he demurred. "No!" I said dryly. The War Office genius bridled like a gamecock: "I'm afraid you are pulling my leg," he spluttered. "Well," I retorted, "I innocently stated in my paper that I had certain lists of guns ordered by the Pretoria Government, and Beit asked me to show it to you. There was no talk of full information, but this must be useful to your people as showing at least the type of thing you are up against. This is a formidable armament anyway; it's a brick towards the full building of knowledge, and I dare say further enquiry will supply more bricks. Good afternoon!" I left, hardly impressed by British military methods.

Another important piece of news which I obtained from my secret sources of information in the Government Office, Pretoria, referred to the number of rifles distributed by the official in charge of this duty, prior to the outbreak of hostilities. My informant sent me authentic copies of the lists in the "Field Comet's" Office, Pretoria, and there could be no disguising them as the lists were multiple copies from the official books, and had been torn out and brought to me in Johannesburg by a member of the official staff. About 100,000 rifles had been distributed in the Transvaal, over 50,000 sent to the Free State, an equal number to the Cape Colony, and between 1,500 and 2,000 to Natal. I took the flimsies to Mr. Emrys Evans, the Johannesburg representative of Mr. Greene, British Agent in Pretoria, and he thought them of such importance that he sent them by special messenger to Greene, by whom they were forwarded, also by special messenger, to Sir Alfred Milner at Cape Town.

In fact, so far from this second Boer War being a struggle between a "handful of rough farmers" and the forces of the whole British Empire, the strength of the Republican armies at the beginning of the war was well up to 150,000 men, while the British hardly had more than 13,000 in all South Africa. Men from all parts of Europe were constantly dribbling into Pretoria, through Delagoa Bay, and being sent out to the various Commandos, while the number of young pro-Boer farmers who rode across the Transvaal border, saw President Kruger and were likewise sent off to join one or other of the Republican forces, was

very great. Why, the number of these young men who innocently wrote home, via Delagoa Bay, Durban, etc., to tell their people all about it, was over 15,000! I ought to know, as I was in charge of the letter-censor office, Durban, from November 1899 till the end of the war, and listed these fellows for the information of Sir Alfred. However, the only punishment they all got for their act of rebellion was being deprived of the franchise for three years after the war ended.

Kruger's preparations for the war embraced also the despatch of young Transvaalers to Europe to be trained as Artillerymen; the importation of heavy and light artillery, including pom-poms and new types of machine guns; the erection of domed Forts around Pretoria; the mounting of big guns in these and the Johannesburg Fort, and the engagement of Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil and other experts to advise the Transvaal and Free State generals. Finally, agents were sent to all the South African ports to buy up the available stock of provisions and send it up by rail, chiefly via Lourenço Marques. In short, it was only owing to the ignorance of the Boer generals, and the ineptitude and lack of discipline of the men forming the Commandos, combined with the stubbornness of the British, that the forces of the latter were not swept into the sea in the first few months.

So assured were the Boer leaders of a prompt and easy success that when, after staying on in Johannesburg for a fortnight after the Transvaal's declaration of war, I was at last arrested and sent down to

Delagoa under the escort of an armed detective, one of the leading officials, on hearing that I meant to go round to Durban, grinned, and said that in that case we would meet again very shortly! General Joubert and his Commandos would be in Durban before I could get round by Lourenço Marques!

The departure of the Uitlander intelligentsia from the Rand resembled that of a flight of startled birds! Shortly after the abortive Bloemfontein Conference it got about that President Kruger intended to arrest some 400 prominent Randites and clap them in prison for conspiracy. I myself was warned by a friendly Pretoria official that he had seen the list on Dr. Leyds's table and had noticed my name on it. Others received similar friendly warnings, and a general *sauve qui peut* ensued, of a most amusing description; fat and portly citizens departing disguised as washerwomen, and so on. So many disappeared, in fact, that it would have been *un effet manqué* to have arrested the rump, and we were left in peace.

When I was given my orders for Delagoa by the Commandant of Jo'burg, I asked him if he really thought the two Republics could thrash the British Empire? He said they had won in the 'eighties and were much stronger now! Asked how, if they did win, they would get on without British capital and enterprise, he said: "Oh, they would not lose all the British capital in the country. They meant to confiscate most of it, and as to British enterprise, they would easily induce other foreigners—more amenable ones—to come in."

The adventures of a certain journalist, who went

to that Boer War as, I believe, a war correspondent, was captured by the Boers in the "armoured train" disaster in Natal at the beginning of things, taken to Pretoria as a prisoner of war, "escaped" to Delagoa Bay, and returned to London as a full-fledged pro-Boer, may well serve as an introduction to my stray notes on that war.

Very curious and unkind rumours were abroad in South Africa touching this escape, and I give them under all reserve. It was said that the impetuous journalist's sudden conversion to the Boer cause was due to his naïve surprise at finding the officials at Pretoria cultured and courteous gentlemen, instead of wild and woolly personages of the half-wit type. It was said, on the other hand, that these same astute officials recognised that a well-known journalist, fully pro-Boer, would be far more useful to them in London than languishing in a Transvaal gaol. There were, therefore, tales told of doors left open, conveniently blind sentinels, and friendly old mounted Boers who, unsuspected by the unconscious hero, shepherded him to Delagoa, heading him off when he strayed, north or south, of his way east. He himself asserts that he saw, but dodged, two such "pursuers" without their seeing him! A claim that smacks of thinness applied to sharpshotted Boer marksmen. One supposes that when poking his nose over a bush to have a look at them, he heard them shouting, "Where is this verdomd Engländer?" What a joke they must have had over it later!

CHAPTER XII

SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE BOER WAR

WHEN the second Boer War broke out in October 1899 we of *The Critic* determined to stay on in Johannesburg until thrown out, or imprisoned. This was by way of protesting against the manner in which the well-to-do—the magnates—had all cleared out on the first symptoms of serious trouble, and left the poorer section to stew in its own juice. We brought out two issues before being arrested and asked to explain matters. This we did on the above lines. I was then made, personally, the following proposition by a leading official, as an emissary of the Boer Government: if I would remain and write up the Boer side of the dispute, to be translated into the various European languages, and used for propaganda purposes, I would receive an honorarium of £200 a month, and the choice of any abandoned Uitlander house in Pretoria or Johannesburg to live in; if I refused this, I would be sent to Lourenço Marques under police escort at the end of the week. I replied that I did not know of anything I had ever written that entitled the Pretoria Government to suggest to me that I should abandon the British and Uitlander cause in the way they proposed. I remarked that I considered it an insult, despite the complimentary estimate of my ability. I was therefore sent to Delagoa Bay under the charge of a

detective, and made my way round to Durban. I had sent my wife and boy of two and a half to her people in England after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference, and it was a sign of the confusion of opinion prevailing, that she met, on the way to Cape Town, several friends from Johannesburg on their way back there, under the impression that the trouble was over and that there would be no war.

In Durban I found that my services would not be accepted by the Military, partly on account of age—I was over forty-nine—and partly owing to my extreme shortsightedness. I obtained, however, the post of head of the letter censorship from the Intelligence Department, through my knowledge of three or four languages and an acquaintance with South African conditions. I was frequently consulted by Sir Percy Scott, then Commandant in Durban, on the latter point. I had a dozen or so picked men under me, and between us we could work in pretty well every language under the sun. We got through an average of 200 letters a day per man, and were particularly interested in bags of mail which by some unspecified process, every now and then, became diverted to Durban, from their proposed route through Lourenço Marques by neutral ships up through the Suez Canal and so to the continent of Europe. The British agents at Lourenço Marques showed a keenness that must have been embarrassing to Pretoria.

The most important of the letters secured by this means was one from Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil, the French officer who advised General Botha on the digging of trenches, to a general on the active list in

France, asking for 10,000 trained old soldiers to be sent out to him. "They might be the greatest blackguards unhanged and of any nationality, so long as they could be trusted to attack when called on. The Boers," explained the Colonel, "had a murderous defence, but could not be induced to follow up the British when these were hurled back. What he needed was a force of desperadoes which he could hurl on the retreating British when these were broken by the Boer defence in the trenches." This letter was sent by me to Sir Alfred Milner and by him to the War Office, London, to find its way ultimately to the columns of *The Times*, when the gallant colonel came to his end, defending a kopje in the Free State.

When one remembers the colossal preparations made by the Transvaal Government for this war, the overwhelming superiority in numbers with which they commenced it, and the tremendous advantage they scored by their sudden, impetuous attack on an unsuspecting enemy, combined with the friendly sympathy of the country people of a great part of the territory which the British had to fight through, it seems astounding that the Boer generals did not sweep on to the sea, driving their enemies before them. The explanation is threefold. First of all, the Boers themselves were by no means the same fighters that they were in 1881. The great mass of them, the country folk, no longer had the daily practice with the rifle at game, enjoyed by their fathers and grandfathers. As an old leading Free Stater, on parole in Durban, said to me: "Our young men can neither ride nor shoot as we could. They are no better at either than

your shop assistants in the towns!" A bitter remark, but with a sting of truth in it. The type that showed up best belonged to the professions and old public-schoolboy class. Men with some sense of civic spirit and class obligation in them. The day of the old Boer is, in fact, definitely over by now: the second quarter of the twentieth century. Why, leaving shooting out of consideration, the builder of motor-cars has so knocked out the breeder of horse-flesh, that it would be impossible to mount one-tenth of the commandos that fought in the 1899-1902 war.

Secondly, Paul Kruger was badly let down by some, at least, of the men to whom he entrusted the supplying of his artillery ammunition, and the armour plates for his Pretoria forts. One trusted agent is said to have bought him a huge lot of condemned melinite shell, and so saved it from being dumped into the Atlantic by the French naval authorities. The head of the Transvaal Field Artillery found it did more harm to his own men than to the enemy, and simply left off using it. As to the armour on the Pretoria forts, when Kruger ordered them to be manned against Lord Roberts's advance, he was reluctantly told, to his dismay, that the plates on the domes of the cupola forts were so thin that they buckled under the pressure of a thumb.

Thirdly and lastly, when he sent a flock of agents round the coast towns to strip them of provisions prior to the outbreak of hostilities, these astute people so managed the affairs in their own interests that the Pretoria officials found it hard to believe that the goods delivered there really represented all that could be

bought for the huge sums said to have been spent. One of these beauties told me in Durban, when on parole there, that when he delivered his little lot, as the proceeds of £10,000 entrusted to him, the official recipient told him flatly that the whole parcel would have been dear at £2,500. It cost my informant a little cheque for £250 to persuade him otherwise.

A sight that burnt itself indelibly on my memory was the one witnessed on the triumphant return of General Buller to Durban after the Relief of Ladysmith. I was present at the Club entrance when he arrived in an open carriage, with two other brass hats, preceded by the acclamations of the multitude on the route from the station, and descended his go-cart steps to shouts from the crowds in Smith Street itself of, “ Good old Buller ! ” “ Three cheers for Natal’s saviour,” and so on and so on. He seemed to absorb it all as a cat sucks milk. When we read later on that Sir George White, giving evidence before a commission in London, had stated that General Buller had signalled to him to abandon Ladysmith, cut his way out, and try conclusions elsewhere, there was a revulsion of feeling in Natal.

It was said that when Sir Charles Warren was defeated at Acton Holmes, General Buller sent an officer post-haste with a despatch to be delivered without fail or delay into the hands of Sir Charles himself. The officer arrived at the Warren camp early next morning, and was told that Sir Charles was in his bath. He insisted that he had to hand the despatch over to the General himself, and was taken presently to where the grizzled old warrior was sitting,

stark, in his tub, sponging himself. He bade the officer-messenger, gruffly, to open the thing and read it to him. The embarrassed man did so, and said afterwards that it was the choicest lot of Billingsgate he had ever come across. His elocutionary effort was punctuated by grunts from Sir Charles, who otherwise completed his ablutions unperturbed.

There was a G.O.C. in this war whose liking for champagne was so unqualified and his modesty so much the same that, lest his men might be shocked by the quantity of the "bubbly" sent up to him from the coast, he instructed his wine merchant at the port to label every alternate consignment of the "booze" sent him "castor oil" and not "champagne." Unfortunately, the manager of this firm happened to go on leave just as an order for so many dozen of "castor oil" came down from the bibulous G.O.C. His *locum tenens*, in his ignorance, took the order as genuine, and though startled by this evidence of disease among the Britannic forces, set to work and collected the huge consignment of the purgative from his own and neighbouring towns. The dismay and disgust of the disgruntled G.O.C. at finding he had been sent that which he asked for, was exactly what all ingenious ones experience when "hoist with their own petards." I can guarantee the truth of this story, but "no names, no pack drill."

I seized the opportunity presented by the apparently interminable Boer War of 1899-1902 and the free time it left on my hands, to make an exhaustive study of South African history, from the first occupation of the Cape by the Dutch to the beginning of the twentieth

century, to see how this war was really led up to, as it must have been. To my mind the main traits of that history are: the never-failing resistance of the Dutch, and later of a section of the British settlers, to any sort of authority from overseas, and the persistent effort of first the Dutch, and later the British Government to prevent the same settlers from pushing farther and farther into the interior. It must be remembered that the original settlement of South Africa synchronised with the great movement of the black, or Bantu, down south and south-west from the north-east. The white settlers had, however, commenced to move eastward and northward from Cape Town even in the days of the Dutch or Batavian Government, despite the efforts of the Governor at the Cape to restrain them, and every separate body of these settlers endeavoured to set up its own Government. A republic was proclaimed at Graaff Reinet, on the very day that the British seized Cape Town.

This process of fighting the Bushman and Hottentot, seizing their land and cattle and enslaving their people persisted under the British régime, and the final clash between the white expansion and the black or Bantu incursion took place somewhere near the Fish River, and led to an almost endless series of native wars. The frontier settlers would come into collision with a native tribe, owing to cattle raiding and so forth, often by both sides, and the settlers would appeal to London for protection against the "overwhelming mass of these natives!" As the country was notoriously poor, and the despatch of troops involved much expenditure of British money in the Colony, it is quite

on the cards that the rumours were correct that alleged that several of these wars were engineered by the business firms, when the financial affairs of the land threatened a crisis. The policy of the Home Government was to push back both sides, grudgingly consent to a minor extension of the white area, set up a neutral zone with forts and admonish both combatants to keep the peace. A vain hope indeed! Sustained pressure from both sides would lead to another clash, another appeal to the Home Government to make a definite end of the particular tribe causing annoyance, and, of course, annex its territory, and the stereotyped reply from London, that troops would be sent out to restore peace and the former boundaries, but that the settlers really must avoid these clashes and live peaceably with their black neighbours. "If Government were to destroy all the frontier tribes complained of, successively, and annex their territory, it would mean that Great Britain would have to embark on the conquest of all Africa up to the Mediterranean! A quite impossible suggestion!"

However, the rate at which the white population increased—families of from twenty-three upward were quite common!—the need for providing land, cattle and sheep, not forgetting slaves, for the growing sons led to a constant expansion of the settled area of the Cape. Trade was also increasing: huge quantities of horns and hides were obtained by the slaughter of the countless herds of game roaming over the country; ivory and ostrich feathers were also on the list; convoys to India called at the Cape ports, and officers on "short leave" from India spent time and

money at Cape Town. All this, nevertheless, spelt progress in a very small way, and if it had not been for a marvellous series of extraneous circumstances that arose during the nineteenth century, South Africa would have remained a land of slipshod settlers, nomad hunters and pastoralists till further orders.

The first awakening came through the activities of certain over-zealous missionaries, shocked at the existence of slavery in this British territory. The pictures drawn by the Rev. Mr. Phillips of conditions out here were as overdrawn as the picture given in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of conditions in America. They availed, however, to rouse Great Britain into one of her blundering enthusiasms, and slavery was abolished with as little regard for the monetary rights of the slave-owners, as was shown, in the incomplete story of the destruction of the Gadarene swine, for the financial interests of the owner of those unfortunate pigs.

The British Government, as usual, troubled itself but little over the fact that its promise of fair compensation was translated by its chain of agents into something perilously near confiscation and expropriation, and racial bitterness over the presence of the British in South Africa at all, as its lords and masters, got a fillip, the repercussions of which are felt to this day. It was quite useless to point out that the Home Government had treated its own British in precisely the same way in the West Indies over this anti-slavery stunt, and that it had been indifferent as to whether slave-owners in the Cape were English or Dutch. A number of farmers, both Dutch and English, thought

that they saw a way to escape from this uncomfortable kind of governance altogether, by trekking north beyond its boundaries, and promptly seized it.

The opportunity arose through one of the most grimly tragic happenings in South Africa's story. Chaka, the founder of the Zulu kingdom, is said to have slaughtered two million natives in the area of this sub-continent.

In any case, one of his generals, Moselikatze by name, with whom he had quarrelled, had swept the land now known as the Orange Free State so clean of its people, that hunters, traders and missionaries, returning from it to the Cape, described it as a fertile land of grass-covered undulating plains, open to any man for the taking. Moselikatze, desiring to put as great a stretch of land as possible between himself and his former chief, Chaka, had retired beyond the Vaal River, leaving the land between the Orange and Vaal Rivers to its countless herds of game.

It is absurd to talk of the Great Trek as purely a Boer gesture of escape from British rule, when in the Free State in the 'eighties I knew numbers of English farmers who had come up in the Trek period: Gradwell and Gladwell, Baynes, Palmer, Holmes and so on; and it is equally foolish to describe this alleged "migration of Boers" as forced to fight for their lives against native tribes and wild beasts. The first party of Boers penetrated this "hostile" land till it looked down on Delagoa Bay, without meeting a native, and was well on its way back before it met and easily defeated an impi sent by Moselikatze to look for some white men said to be knocking about.

After this Moselikatze retired beyond the Limpopo, and founded the Matabele tribe.

The struggles of the South African Dutch with natives and wild beasts were chiefly in the Cape in earlier days, and the English, though fewer, took their due part in this.

There were lions in the Free State till far later, of course. Did not Bayne, of Bayne's Vlei, near Bloemfontein, once sue some British officers for poaching two of the lions he was preserving for the benefit of parties that used to come up from Cape military stations big-game hunting? Did not this same Bayne keep a lion cub in the yard of his house in Bloemfontein, till three-quarters grown, to the distinct uneasiness of his neighbours, forced to look carefully up and down the road before setting out for office in the morning? One of them told me of their relief at hearing at last that the brute had chewed up a native *umfaan*, and so given them an excuse to organise a battue for its destruction.

Of course, when the Boers trekked into Natal it was a different matter. They had the Zulus to deal with, and the story is punctuated with tragic massacres of whites and blacks and grim revenges.

The leading feature of this whole period up to the end of the century, and the close of the second Boer War, is the persistent effort of the Boer to persuade the British nation, its Government and the civilised world at large, that in crossing the border of Cape Colony they had shaken themselves free of British rule, and were entitled to consider themselves as "on their own." The British view, and indubitably the

right one, is that no Great Power can cease to be responsible for its subjects, much less for large bodies of such subjects, merely because they have crossed its frontiers into the wilds. If the country into which they had migrated had proved to be a civilised one, and they had become a nuisance to it, Great Britain would have been as promptly requested to call its subjects back again as she was to recall Jameson and his little lot of raiders, but logic was never a strong Boer characteristic.

The most amusing incident in connection with this attempt to shake off the British tie was provided when the "Volksraad of Maritzburg," elected to represent the "Republic of Natal" after the Boers, with the assistance of Panda, had "subjugated" the recognised Zulu King, his brother, approached the British Government, and offered to allow the British fleet to protect the Natal and Zululand coast, if the said Government recognised the above-named Republic and its arrangements with its friend Panda!

The British Government, of course, curtly squashed these crude pretensions by reminding these Natal Boers that they never had shed and never could shed their status of British subjects, and placidly asserting its authority over this region which they had so obligingly added to the Empire.

The attitude that Great Britain has unfailingly maintained with regard to the Transvaal, the Free State, and wheresoever the Boers have attempted to set up a Government apart from British rule, is that Britain is Sovereign Lord and Suzerain of South Africa between the frontiers of territories belonging to any other European Power, and that any self-

government allowed to any community of whites or natives within that area has never exceeded the acme of self-rule within the Empire. Germany herself acknowledged this claim as valid when she withdrew before the emphatic warning of "hands off" issued from London in reply to her expressed intention to intervene in the Jameson Raid incident. The various Boer wars have consistently been treated as the domestic internal affair of the Empire.

What is incomprehensible to the trained journalistic observer is that the financial, industrial and commercial collapse that has inevitably occurred in any of these so-called "Boer Republics," when the British Government has allowed them to play at being Free States, has failed to drive into their brains that they are congenitally incapable of standing alone. The Orange River territory did well as a Sovereignty, but fell into bankruptcy as a Free State. The Transvaal, after it was saved from imminent ruin in 1876 by being taken over, showed its peculiar sense of gratitude by rushing into war with Great Britain in 1881, and then fell into worse bankruptcy still by 1886, only to be saved by British enterprise on the goldfields. Finally, to prove its stiff-neckedness, it actually went for Great Britain again in 1899, because that Power dared to support the flat refusal of the British "Uitlanders," who had made the country wealthy and prosperous, to accept the position of helots into which it was Paul Kruger's mad idea to crush them.

But the Boer always thought the Uitlander was simply there to be taxed!

The backveld Boers of the Transvaal and Free

State do not, even now, appear to have grasped the lesson of their terrible experiences of 1899-1902.

However, Great Britain gave £12,000,000 to repair the "desolation," and the names of Botha, Smuts and the whole of the South African Party testify to the burial of the hatchet by the progressive Dutch.

The two heroes *par excellence* of the Raid and Boer War episode on the Uitlander side were unquestionably Wools-Sampson and Karri Davis. These two were of the General Gordon breed, in that they made a solemn pact with one another to accept no distinction whatever that might be offered them by the Imperial Government for anything they might do for the cause they were serving. Wools-Sampson refused the V.C. and Karri Davis the C.B. They were further of the Hampden pattern, in that they were so permeated with conviction of the righteousness and ultimate triumph of the Uitlander cause, they refused the terms of release offered the Reform Committee by Paul Kruger and remained in the Pretoria Gaol, what time some of their weaker brethren called on that blunt-spoken President to thank him for his clemency, and were woefully insulted for their pains, being likened by the said "Oom Paul" to puppies that licked the hand that beat them!

The period between 1902 and the convention of 1909, which led to the Union of the four South African colonies, was one of rehabilitation and reorganisation. It was marked by one or two incidents that showed the implacable stubbornness of the older Boer character, and the similarity of their temperament to that of the old Hebrews of whom it

stands written that you "may bray them in a mortar and their folly will not depart from them!"

The whole object of the war was to force the British race to acknowledge that these "Republics" of about half a million Boers had the right to refuse the immigrant British, who were building up the country, the rights of citizenship that are allowed all immigrants in every decent State in the world, and to tax them up to 98 per cent. of the revenue without representation. They had been thoroughly beaten and utterly crushed, yet had been granted terms of unequalled generosity.

Yet, although the whole Boer population on surrendering had sworn fealty to the King, an ex-Vice-President of the Transvaal assisted at the formal burial of the Transvaal flag, a little later, and assured the assembled company that the day would come when the flag, together with their freedom, would rise from the grave!

Not only this, but a section of the late Republicans published the grossest libels on the British conduct of the war. They knew perfectly well that the destruction of farm homesteads in the two Republics had been forced on Lord Roberts by the fact that Boers captured in the first British advance, released and allowed to return to their farms on their solemn undertaking to take no further part in the hostilities, had deliberately broken their word, taken up arms again, and were using their homesteads as fortresses and places of refuge. A still greater outrage was their accusing the British of murdering the Boer women and children to the tune of 20,000 to 30,000 in the

concentration camps in which they gave asylum to those Boer women and children whom they found abandoned on farms by their men-folk. Many of these unfortunates were starving and diseased beyond recovery when discovered, a large number dying in the process of removal. The criminal folly of this accusation was fully proved when General Botha, towards the end of the war, asked Lord Roberts to find room in the concentration camps for 5,000 men, women and children for whom he was no longer able to provide. Yet these scandalous libels are repeated in Deneys Reitz's book, *Commando*, and General Smuts accords them silent support in his "Foreword."

The fault of the British people is that they credit an enemy with a fine feeling of gratitude and honour which he is frequently incapable of entertaining.

This British trait was further exemplified when Lord Milner asked the co-operation of Louis Botha and other Boer leaders in reorganising the affairs of the late two Republics and was curtly refused and told to get on with the work himself, and still further when the British Government restored the right of self-government to both the Transvaal and the Free State, although it was well known that the majority in the Parliaments of both countries would be overwhelmingly Dutch. The final proof of this generous belief in Boer gratitude was, of course, the confirmation by the British Parliament of the South Africa Act, or Act of Union of the four colonies of the sub-continent, of which more presently.

It may be said, however, at once, that Great Britain's trust has been largely justified by the conduct of many

Dutch leaders. General Botha, General Smuts, Colonel Reitz, Colonel van Zyl and the mass of the South African Party are men who stood nobly by their oaths to the King during the Great War, and the combined forces of the Dutch and British in the present South African Party largely outnumbered those of the recalcitrant Boers of the Nationalist Party at the last General Election. This election returned General Hertzog to power, simply thanks to the absurd 15 per cent. advantage to the country voters foolishly agreed on by the Convention of 1909. The majority of the South African electorate is quite sound, and the apparent hold the Nationalists have on the country is too false and delusive to be a real danger.

Nevertheless, the building up of the people of South Africa into one homogeneous nation is proceeding but slowly. There is the strength of the old Boer tradition of their forefathers as sole white lords of creation in this sub-continent, struggling against the savages, the wild beasts and the difficulties of the country, but always with the Bible in one hand, if the rifle were in the other. The faith was in their hearts that God was with them, and the Promised Land ahead of them. The streams the Voortrekkers crossed in their wanderings were to them, successively, Nylstrooms, or Niles; settlements established were named Bethel, Bethlehem or Bethesda, to keep alive their Biblical spirit, and, of course, the British from whom they were trying to flee fitted into the rôle of the Egyptians. Such a tradition and habit of thought dies hard with a race of farmers, dwelling on huge farms of ten thousand acres or more, and mainly

coming in contact with their fellows at Nachتماال, or Communion Services, at the nearest town at specified seasons.

When one considers that even as time went by and conditions grew more settled, with towns springing up, State and Municipal Governments becoming established, and the Services, trades and professions offering opportunities to country Boer and town Britisher alike, power, as betokened by the franchise, has remained in the hands of the rural population, it is no wonder that convinced Boer politicians, and even merely ambitious ones, sought the favour of the country-side, and indulged, with or without *bona fides*, in the usual flattery involved in the process. There is nothing that conduces more potently to the "dreaming of dreams" than religious and racial fanaticism, especially when combined with ignorance. The Mahdi, Kruger and William II of Germany are outstanding modern instances, and Krugerism is by no means dead in South Africa, despite the catastrophe into which it was led by its chief prophet and his followers of the time.

One curious characteristic of the Boers, born apparently of the narrowness of their lives, was always that, when shut in by the four walls of their Raadzaal or Parliament chamber, as the elect of their people, they considered themselves indeed lords of creation, and that their resolutions settled whatever business they might have on hand, were it internal or external politics or what not, finally and conclusively, however such resolutions might conflict with the irresistible logic of history or economics.

A striking example of the dull-wittedness of this type of the rural Boer was given just after the Boer War. A pro-Boer M.P. came out from England to the Cape, and asked Lord Milner for facilities to visit the Free State and Transvaal and study their conditions, past, present and future. It was ascertained that a prominent Free State farmer was returning home from the Cape, and our M.P. was sent up with him, with one of the Milnerian staff as bear-leader. (I had this story from the lips of the last.) Introductions being made and the M.P. having explained that he was out to study the Boer problem for himself, with an open mind, he was duly supplied by the Free Stater with all the exposure of the wicked ways of the Imperial Government, and the virtuous patience and heroic resistance of the two Republics to an unwarrantable invasion, that he could put down in his note-book in shorthand in the time.

The Free Stater's special grievance was that the British had destroyed a two-storied stone homestead on his farm, a building that had cost £2,000, and had only paid him £500 in compensation. Asked by the M.P. why they had destroyed it, the Free Stater said because it was a place where the burghers could rest between fights! "It was not fair!" he declared; "the British held the towns as such rest places, and would not leave the burghers even their farms!" "You took Newcastle and tried to take Ladysmith and Mafeking," murmured the Milner man, but the Free Stater ignored him. The M.P. looked dubious, but returned to the farm question. "Why did they only give you £500 for a farm worth £2,000?" "They

said they had only £12,000,000 to divide between the two Republics. It was absurd," said the Burgher, "our claims came to double that! And then they said they had to compensate the Uitlander for damages too! After giving him all our rights and privileges!" Again the M.P. looked dubious. So the Milner man took a hand: "What size is your farm?" he asked. "Six thousand morgen, and it was good land till the troops came there," said the Free Stater. "What did you give for it?" "About ten shillings a morgen in old John Brand's time," came the answer. "Would you take that now?" asked his interlocutor. "Alle Magtig, No!" exclaimed the other; "land is worth two pounds a morgen now!" "How's that?" asked the M.P., surprised. "Well," explained the Boer knowingly, "it's only fair, now the British have taken the country and made it impossible for us to make more trouble, that peace and security should send values up." "Oh, I see that! But if your farm has gone up from £3,000 to £12,000 don't you think you can stand a loss on your homestead from £2,000 to £500?" "What has that to do with it?" asked the Free Stater sharply. But the M.P. closed his notebook with a snap!

It has been a curious feature of South African history that, whenever the country fell into one of its periodical slumps, something occurred to put it on its legs again till it slipped back once more. Wool, ostrich feathers, diamonds and gold were each, in turn, the good fairies whose wands did the needful. An indisputable fact is that in each case salvation came from without. It will hardly be claimed that it was South African

born men, or South African money that made the diamond- and goldfields a success, or even took South Africa's wool and feathers to Bradford, London and Paris. The Boer mentality, in fact, acted largely as a brake or weight on their industries. Farmers in the Free State left their sheep unshorn while they went transport riding to Kimberley, and for long, when they did shear them, sent the wool to market in so filthy a state as to imperil the industry. The Boers in the Republic grudged the presence of the Uitlander on their holy soil, while greedily grasping at the benefits he brought. Some old Boers would sooner have done without either! On my first journey, by cart, to Barberton I met an old farmer, who, after the usual enquiries where I came from, how my wife was, how many children I had, where I was going, and so forth, shook his head when I said I was off to the goldfields. "Gold!" he said; "gold! Why do all you people want all this gold?"

However, the present-day South African Dutch are fully on a par with present-day Canadians and Australians, except perhaps in literature and the arts, though in these they are a good second; in farming they still, with happy exceptions, seem fairly backward, and the less said about political ability, the better. Sir William Vernon Harcourt, who, with all his shortcomings, was a trained politician and a gentleman, deplored the "low tone" of public life in South Africa laid bare at the enquiry into the Jameson Raid; and the dull vulgarity of Nationalist diatribes in the Union Parliament does not argue much improvement on that side of the House and its followers. The joint

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British and Dutch South African Party, under its brilliant leader, General Smuts, is really the hope of the country, and, as it is evidently sharpening its wits on the dullness of the old Boer Party, may be trusted to do better in the future than it has done in the past.

There used to be a saying that "South African racialism was like a cur that came out of its kennel and snapped when Prosperity departed, but retreated into its kennel again when Prosperity returned." Up to the time of writing, the Nationalist Government has been making the worst of a bad job, so far as the depression is concerned, and has egged on Racialism in its barking and growling.

And finally, as to physical progress, returns for the Defence Force declare this to be a C 3 population. Yet it produces A 1 sportsmen in several lines. But with the Government deliberately thrusting the country people and large sections of the townsmen into the "Poor White" class, the future is not promising in this regard.

The greatest danger lies in the Boer Party's persistent endeavour to keep down the native, and its stubborn refusal to recognise the Union as merely the shank end of this great continent. It would be money well spent to take the whole Parliament on a trip to Europe and back by the air route over Africa. It would shake their minds up a bit to learn what small potatoes they really are, in an international or racial sense.

There is, fortunately, too great a diversity of race, language, custom and ability among the mass of the South African natives for there to be much danger of a concerted movement. The rise of an African civilisa-

tion would probably prove as disjointed and split-up an affair as that of Europe has been. With Africa, North of the Zambesi, assimilating the thoughts and ways of Europe more and more rapidly from what is a mere handful of Europeans, engaged in training them, it is merely the acme of folly for the whites of South Africa themselves, a mere 2,000,000 in number, to persist in refusing their 6,000,000 natives the right to any kind of white work at all, except as teachers and clergy. By a judicious policy of uplift here, the South might attain to a unique position of influence in all Africa.

The one great factor, of change, is likely to prove to be miscegenation, and the blending of the races, if dawdling here, is anything but a slow process farther north.

Nevertheless, there is a wild yet pathetic romance about the real old Boer stories that is touching and fascinating, and fills one with sympathetic regard for this fine, sturdy and virile people. The most characteristic of these stories that I have ever heard is one of a number of Boer families trekking up north with their wagons and live stock and coming at sunset to a high point on a mountain-side where they expected to find a good stream. The stream and its water were there, but at the bottom of a fairly steep cliff of some 300 to 400 feet deep. It was too late to return to the foot of the mount, the rise ahead too steep and rugged to allow of their going farther in the dark. A young man of the party volunteered to climb down and see if it were practicable to bring up a supply. Disregarding his elders' dissuasions, he commenced the perilous

descent, lost his footing, fell and crashed on to a ledge some 200 to 300 feet down. His fall was broken by bushes, but he had to call out to the watchers above that he had broken a leg and was lying helpless. The party above set to work to bind all the reins, *riempjies* and ropes they possessed together, but found next morning that their combined length was still far too short to reach the unfortunate young man.

After a whole day had been lost in desperate attempts to get to his aid, he called out faintly to his father on the morning of the third day that he could endure the agony of his injury, his hunger and thirst no longer, and besought him, with his skill with the rifle, to put him out of his misery. The father called all the members of the trek together, and it was solemnly decided, after long, painful discussion, that the boy's request must be conceded. The whole party was suffering privations, and it was equally impossible to rescue the lad, or to leave him to die of exhaustion. The assembly moved to the edge of the cliff, and after hymns had been sung and prayers said, the father begged his son's and God's forgiveness for what he was about to do. Farewells were said between the sorrowers above and the half-conscious sufferer below, and the father shot his boy through the forehead.

An amusing incident occurred during Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's visit to South Africa shortly after the Boer War. This astute statesman had displayed an unsuspected vein of humour at a great banquet given him in Johannesburg by solemnly assuring the assembled gathering of magnates, mining, professional

and commercial men that "whatever happens you need not fear that Great Britain would ever allow you to be governed from"—here he paused, and when we all sat there expecting him to conclude with the words "Downing Street," he electrified the gathering by quietly adding, "Park Lane!" A moment of stupefaction followed, broken by a startled movement on the part of the chairman, Sir Percy FitzPatrick, and then a shout of laughter rose to the ceiling at this promise from an Imperial Minister.

Mr. Chamberlain was highly amused at Pretoria by what came to be known as the "story of the lost well." He had been much taken by the liveliness of the young secretary of his Reception Committee, and had insisted on the young man's sitting next to him at the banquet given in his honour. During that function the British Minister asked his young friend confidentially if there were really anything serious in the tales he heard everywhere of the unsatisfactory working of the Reparations Commission. "I only know they have treated me very funnily," replied the secretary, with his usual little shy giggle. Chamberlain sat back in his chair with an expression that plainly said, "Trapped, by Jove!"

"Yes," he drawled, witheringly, "and how was that?"

"Well," replied the other, "they have lost my well, and quite a good well too, and refuse to find it and give me another."

"Lost your well?" ejaculated Joseph; "how could they lose a well?"

"All I know is," explained the other, "that I have

quite a nice house in the suburbs, with a garden and large grounds, and that I handed the whole lot to the military as a hospital when Roberts came in. They handed it back last month. I don't mind the damage done in their two years' use of it, but I had quite a good well in the grounds ; a circular bricked well, 150 feet deep, cost £400, and I can't find it anywhere. They have either taken it away or filled it up, and they won't find it for me, or give me another. I don't want the money, but I do want my well ! ”

Chamberlain was much amused, and took a note, evidently to recount the tale at London dinners.

Six months later, this secretary was called up to the Reparations Office, to be asked by an irate and much-harassed Colonel, “ What's all this d——d nonsense you've been telling Chamberlain about a ‘ lost well ’ ? Here is a cable from him telling me to find it or give you another.”

The Secretary persisted in his statement that the whole of his grounds had been churned up by ambulances and wagons, till it was impossible to tell where the well had been. As the Colonel had this verified, and was shown the contractors' receipted bill for building it, he, like a prudent busy man, paid £400 and duly reported so to Chamberlain. At all events, there is the well to-day to confirm the story, though it preserves a discreet silence as to whether it is a new one, or the miraculously rediscovered old one.

An absurd incident occurred at one of the agricultural settlements inaugurated under the Milner régime after the Boer War. The Colonel in charge called the Boer settlers together one day and said that an

important personage connected with the Government proposed to visit the settlement next day ; was, in fact, on his way from Pretoria, and that he, the Colonel, thought it would be nice if the settlers marked the occasion in some way to show their gratitude for what was being done for them.

On consideration they said they would take the personage's horses out of his carriage at the gates and draw the vehicle to the offices themselves. This was regarded as quite nice and agreed to.

What resulted was this : the carriage drew up at the gates and the personage looked out. He saw a number of unkempt and wild-looking Boers approaching, brandishing a rope, and promptly slipped out of the other door and skimmed across the veld. When overtaken by an official and told the facts of the case, he explained that he had noticed a rare kind of primrose and had got out to gather it.

Seriously speaking, the restoration of the two Republics was a marvellous achievement and did Lord Milner immense credit.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MILNER RÉGIME

THE sub-continent, from 1902 to 1909, underwent a period of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Mining men on the Rand, industrial and commercial men everywhere, and the farmers, were too busy trying to make good their losses of the war-time to have much time for politics.

There were, of course, the inevitable complaints on all sides against the Milner régime. He had brought up to the Transvaal a bevy of ambitious young men, known locally as the "Milner Kindergarten," estimable youngsters no doubt, though none of them has set the Vaal or Orange River on fire so far. But considering that the war had added two huge countries to the Empire, it was no wonder that all the influential old ladies in England plagued the life of the Colonial Minister out for places under this new dispensation for their younger sons, nephews, cousins, and hangers-on generally.

Was it not generally rumoured during the war itself that no distinguished soldier came to a high command except through petticoat influence with the War Office? And so it was with the reconstruction of the two "Republics." No British Uitlander, of whatever South African experience, need apply for a billet in that reconstruction. Very few did, but to us

of the Press, looking on, it was a source of cynical amusement to be instructed, by the hour together, by young men who, so far as the problems of the sub-continent went, "had never set a squadron in the field, nor the division of a battle knew more than a spinster," how South Africa really should be run! Why, one of them did not even know enough to renew the lease of the municipal offices, Johannesburg, and let the town in for a needless waste of £17,000 or so on a wood and iron structure, the "Tin Temple," a veritable torture chamber to work in.

The one point on which matters South African collided with Imperial and World interests during this period was the step taken by the Rand gold-mining interests to substitute Chinese labour for South African native ditto.

It was, of course, unpardonable of the Liberals to give a luridly false picture of Chinese labour on the Rand as slavery, and cruel slavery at that, but it was still more unpardonable of the Rand magnates to bring a horde of the lowest class of Chinamen into the midst of a fairly civilised European community, without adequate provision for their control. The fact remains that the Chinese were constantly breaking out, and the looting and smashing of stores, assaults and even murder, were of not infrequent occurrence.

A decently dressed respectable woman, in a great state of agitation, came into my editorial sanctum at *The Critic* one day and told me of the nerve-racking experience she had had the night before.

She was the wife of a mine foreman on the line of reef, and lived with her husband and twelve-month-

old baby in a three-roomed cottage a little apart from the rest of the white men's quarters. They had gone to bed as usual and were fast asleep, when about midnight they were awakened by the most fiendish yells and unearthly shouts all round the house, and heavy smashing blows on their window. She had screamed and snatched up her baby from its cot alongside, while her husband, with an oath, jumped out of bed, hurriedly lit the candle on the little table by its side, and seized his rifle from the corner of the room. Just as he did so and had sprung between the bed and the window, the window frame crashed to the floor, and she had a vision, by the flickering light of the candle, of a mass of yellow faces crammed in the opening. They were howling as if mad drunk. She cried to her husband, "Shoot, for the child's sake, shoot!" "I can't," he groaned, "the d——d thing's stuck!" And then, as if by magic, the whole of the Chinese cleared off, and they heard their yells die away in the distance. The sight of the husband pointing his useless gun at them had proved too much for their courage! She had come into town, broken, and wild horses would not drag her and her child out to the mine again!

The Mine magnates had proved to their own, if to no one else's, satisfaction that it was quite impossible to obtain a sufficiency of elementary, or native, labour in Africa to meet the requirements of the gold-mining industry. The falsity of this contention was definitely proved when, on self-government being granted to the two ex-Republics, Louis Botha, as Premier of the Transvaal by grace of a strong Boer majority, abolished

Chinese labour in its entirety. Enough African native labour has been found since, to run not only the gold-mines, but the collieries and secondary industries of the sub-continent, and to provide domestic service as well.

The case was on all fours with the earlier introduction of Indians into Natal to run the sugar industry. The same excuse was made that African native labour was not procurable. Considering that the pay offered the African native for work on the sugar plantations was one 5s. blanket per month, the contention was probably correct! It is, however, eminently painful to think that the present evils of the presence of the Indians in Natal arose from the refusal of the Sugar magnates to pay native labourers more than a 5s. blanket per month. The tragedy of the business is that, as is well-known, the white immigration into South Africa from the West has been accompanied by an Asiatic migration down the East Coast. The two streams met in Natal, and one hopes that the Natal Sugar magnates are pleased to think that it was by their aid that the Eastern immigration has so far prospered to the injury of white settlement as to make the ultimate outcome still uncertain.

It was, however, the British Imperial Parliament that was chiefly affected by this introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal Goldfields. A general election came on in Great Britain shortly afterwards. There has probably never been a more viciously slanderous distortion of plain facts than the misrepresentations of the conditions of Chinese labour on the Rand, indulged in by Liberal candidates.

Brutal slavery was the mildest of the terms used, and the British electorate was horrified at the accounts sworn to of the fate of these "unfortunate Chinks." The Liberals, in short, swept the field, and the only apology made on their behalf for having won by a campaign of lies was Mr. Winston Churchill's admission that the accounts given of the conditions of this Chinese labour had been sufficiently inaccurate to amount to what he was pleased to call "a terminological inexactitude."

My relations with the owners of *The Critic* had ceased to be harmonious. I had opposed Chinese labour as unnecessary, and when they decided to support it, I had to ask them to get someone else to write up the *volte-face*. I had also held that the Milner régime was too much "in the pockets," to use a Jameson phrase, of the capitalists to suit the interests of the general community. I had quoted in proof thereof the Government's decision to make everyone who had left the least signs of occupation of premises during the Boer War pay half-rent for the whole period, although they had had none of the benefits of occupancy. This dictum had swallowed up the small means with which many had returned in hopes of a restart and had ruined them.

I found it impossible, however, to revive the old Uitlander spirit among the better classes. They were, they said, too busy making money, and a public meeting organised by a few of the faithful, including Dale Lace and myself, was deliberately broken up by a reverend gentleman, who acknowledged to me later that he had acted as a professional "smasher of

meetings" and "disturber of speeches" in home elections.

Altogether, my position on *The Critic* became untenable, and when I started a new weekly of my own with excellent advertising support, the day of its first issue synchronised with Premier Botha's announcement that Chinese labour must be abandoned at once, and finally. The whole Rand community gasped with horror, believing itself ruined, and incidentally all my advertisers withdrew support on the same plea.

I therefore accepted an offer of the position of Editor of the *Natal Advertiser*, and arrived in Durban in time to take a prominent part in the Union agitation.

I had done good industrial work in the two Republics, and had fought, not without success, for the Uitlander and the Empire, but I had not kow-towed to the Mine magnates. The later owners of *The Critic* had, and while the magnates had no time for me, the general public had no time for *The Critic*.

I arrived in Durban in the middle of the Bambata rebellion. There was no tangible evidence of any disturbance visible from the train on the way down, nor in the aspect of the towns passed through or of Durban itself. I had no knowledge how the *émeute* had been caused, but gathered later that it had been an affair of some importance, as the death-roll on the side of the native rebels came to 6,000.

It was suppressed by Natal forces alone, without the aid of Imperial troops, and while Sir Duncan Mackenzie was commander of the forces in the field, the plan of campaign was dictated by two octogenarian colonels located in Durban, of great native experience. The

main idea of the campaign was to move bodies of troops by road along and across country to bewilder the enemy native as to where a blow would be struck. The big fight took place in the Ndkandlha Forest, where the rebels were shot down, even from trees, without mercy, after it had been found that prisoners disarmed and told to proceed to the camp had taken up assegais again, and attacked and killed Natal men from behind. Great care was taken not to transgress the Zulu border, as the Zulus were known to be straining at the leash and growling to be allowed to get at the whites.

Zulu and Natal houseboys in Johannesburg left their employment to rush down and join in the fray. The rebels found, however, that their old reputation as members of the "fighting Zulu race" availed them little, as they had no knowledge of military training, and but few arms even of the assegai type, some of the heroes from the Rand handling old umbrellas with carving knives tied to the tops.

An unpleasant feature of the native unrest on the Rand was that some of the houseboys bragged that if all went well in Natal, they on the Rand were to kill their missuses. When one of the rascals was asked by his particular "missus," "Would you kill me, Jim?" he said with a grin, "Oh no! I kill missus over the way: boy there come kill you!" A crude jest, but unpleasant.

The chief Natal problem of more than mere local interest was of course the Indian question. I saw much in the days before the Great War of Gandhi, Gokhale, and the leading Indian merchants of Durban.

In fact, I had not been in Durban many days before a deputation of the latter waited on me, to know what my attitude on the South African Indian question might be. It was known I had been given a free hand, so long as I ran a British South African and Imperial policy. I replied to the deputation, that I had the greatest respect for the Indian people, to whose history I had devoted considerable study, but that here in South Africa we had already the British, the Boers, and many kinds of black, and had no room for another race, even if it came from a superior planet. Many of them had, however, been allowed in already, and were here legally, and if any of them had personal grievances, I would be quite ready to take their cases up.

With this they seemed quite content, but their leader put me rather in a quandary. His name was Abu Baker, a cultured Indian gentleman, educated at Oxford, and now running a large business between India and Natal, with offices and stores in the centre of West Street. He said quietly, "What would you say to my case, Mr. Hallé? I arrived here in Durban last week with two steamers from Bombay. My own ships, my own cargoes, English officers and crew all paid by me. When we made fast to the wharf, I tried to go ashore to my house. When I reached the foot of the gangway, a native constable called to me, 'Go back, black man, and let white men go first!' Not wishing to cause a disturbance I went back and waited, while my captain, my officers and my crew went ashore, and when my little white cabin boy had gone down the gangway too, the native constable

called to me, 'Now, black man, you come down.'” Incidentally, Mr. Abu Baker is no darker than an Italian.

Having spoken his piece quite calmly, he and the rest of the deputation sat regarding me. I did not turn a hair, but replied they would all understand that no Englishman or Natalian would fail to condemn so gross and stupid an excess of duty, and had there been a decent dock official near, he would have intervened promptly. I was certain none of those present, least of all Mr. Baker, though chief sufferer by it, would allow himself to be influenced on any main question by so regrettable an incident. I would mention it in the paper, if Mr. Baker thought it was worth while, but in any case would let the wharf officials know about it. Mr. Baker said it was not worth while, he had already spoken. I smiled, and suggested that his telling me about it was by way of a question in an examination paper. At this they all laughed, and said that, in any case, they had been quite pleased by the interview; and old Dawed Mahomed, the reputed millionaire, said that when Mahomet was buried, two pipes were let down into his grave, and two archangels continuously poured honey down the one and milk down the other. He would pray that the same might be done for me! I suggested, as we all rose, that whisky down the one and soda-water, iced, down the other would better suit rough European tastes, on which he said, “Ah, well! You must have your little joke,” and we parted the best of friends all round.

I have always regarded Mahatma Gandhi as an amusing if dangerous compound of the Irish agitator

of the de Valera type and the wily Boer politician of the "Ja Broer" order, of which General Hertzog may be regarded as High-Priest. All three are past-masters of a bewildering verbosity, the object of which seems to be to obscure counsel rather than enlighten it. Even the casuists of London have declared themselves unable to gather what Hertzog is really driving at in his interminable harangues on the rights of the Union. De Valera plainly holds that a wilderness of wild and whirring words impresses the foggy intellect of his followers. Mahatma Gandhi's loquacity seems deliberately designed to cover phrases or sentences which, receiving little notice at the time, can be used later as proof that he had continuously pursued the one and only aim of his country's independence. All three have pursued absolute independence as their one object, and have regarded all and every concession as a step nearer that end, their own acceptance of any particular concession as *final*, being held, on their side, as forced from them by *force majeure* and therefore invalid and non-binding. A striking instance of this was the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement. It was no sooner published than it drew a letter from Gandhi in which it was made quite clear, between the lines, that he, Gandhi, now proposed to work for something more.

My frequent conversations with the Mahatma proved conclusively to me the truth of Kipling's profound saying that East and West could never meet—or if they did, could not mingle any more than oil and water. He, Gandhi, was holding forth one day in my office on the perfect fitness of the South

African Indian for the franchise, municipal and Parliamentary, and of the Indian generally for Swaraj or independence, when I interrupted him to ask whether he himself had not had a university education, or its equivalent, in England, to which he replied with a smirk—he is one of the most conceited of men—"Certainly." "And you have a thorough grasp of Western civilisation?" I continued. "I flatter myself that I am on a par, in all senses, with the intellectuals of Europe," he answered with another smirk. "Then how is it that, in India, you declare yourself a true Hindu, and worship the cow as a sacred animal?" I asked. He passed the subject off with a wave of the hand and a, "You do not understand the mysteries of our faith, or you would see that my attitude is not contradictory. Besides, one has to be gentle with the lesser brethren."

It was on this occasion, I think, that I had an illustration of the relations of this gentleman with his "lesser brethren." Our talk was interrupted by my office door slowly opening, and a gaunt old Hindu in a loin-cloth, with straggling white hair and beard reaching to his shoulders and chest, crawling in on his hands and knees. This object sidled up to Gandhi, took one of the latter's bare feet in his hands, kissing and fondling it, while he mumbled some unintelligible lingo. Gandhi murmured something in response, and made movements over his head as if blessing him. "Look here, Mr. Gandhi!" I said sharply, "you are not the Pope of Rome, and this isn't a place in which you can do your mumbo-jumbo business. As you evidently told this old humbug to come here, you will

kindly tell him to clear out, before he is thrown out. It doesn't impress me that you have this kind of control over this kind of creature." He spoke soothingly to the old fanatic, who rose and wandered out muttering, after treating me to a venomous glare.

"I think you had better follow him, Mr. Gandhi," I said contemptuously; "I can quite see that you might be a danger in India, where you count this sort of follower by the million. But I can't understand your playing this card in an argument based on the fitness of the Indians now here in South Africa for all sorts of civilised rights. It only convinces me that it would be folly to promote Indian immigration on a large scale." "But getting them here raises them," he smirked. "It looks like it!" I finished dryly.

Mr. Gokhale, and the two later Commissioners, Mr. Sastri and Sir Kurma Reddi, were men of a different order entirely, the two latter really working for a sound solution of a confessedly difficult problem. Mr. Sastri, in fact, told the local Indians freely and frankly that if they wanted consideration, they must work for their own elevation, and that of their lower brethren, in the social and educational scale. The better-class Indians in Natal I have always found to be well-bred, courteous and capable people; and if they are occasionally capable enough to beat the European Natalian in business, these be mysteries beyond my province. I was much amused by the whole-hearted sincerity with which Mr. Gokhale assured me he wanted neither political nor municipal rights for his people, "merely equal trading rights"! I told him that was precisely what I would ask in his position.

His Indians, by their greater industry, and the moderation of their demands in the way of pay and living, could hold their own against the Europeans in trade, and were gradually ousting them in both town and country. "Let them go on doing this, and municipal rights and political rights must fall into their laps like ripe apples." He asked me what was my solution of the whole problem, and I replied, "That of Cecil Rhodes's 'equal rights for all civilised men below the Zambesi,' with the accent on 'civilised.' Fix your qualifications for your different rights and privileges high enough to suit the European level, and you cannot refuse either to anyone allowed into the country who passes muster." Mr. Gokhale shook his head and smiled, and intimated that I must see that his people were rapidly advancing in these directions here in South Africa, but that he thought racial prejudice would long be a disturbing factor. I suggested that it rested with them to destroy this. So long as his South African Indians used their wits mainly in trying to dodge the immigration laws, and circumvent the laws of the country when they, by hook or by crook, got into it, they could hardly expect the South African European to love them ! His presence was, however, a sign that an effort was to be made, as he had said, to raise them.

This Indian problem provides another reason—if the Native question were not alone sufficient—why South Africa should strain every nerve to increase and strengthen its white population tenfold !

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMING OF UNION

I WAS thus early brought into sharp contact with the two chief abiding South African troubles, that seem more accentuated here in Natal than in any of the three other divisions of the sub-continent: the native problem, because of the proximity of Zululand with its hordes of virile blacks, and the Indian question, because Natal had brought it on itself.

The Bambata rebellion and its suppression may be likened to the lancing of a boil, the unhealthy condition of the body remaining uncured. Native discontent continued to spread in the sub-continent, and legislation so far seems intended as forcible suppression rather than healing.

As to the Indian problem, Mr. Sastri and Sir Kurma Reddi have done much, both in raising and educating the local Indian and promoting a *modus vivendi*. The crucial moment will arise after the settlement of the crisis between India and the Imperial Government. If and when India obtains dominion status, the problem of the South African Indian will become one of profound difficulty.

Meanwhile, the fact that the two ex-Republics were now self-governing British colonies, like the Cape and Natal, had revived the idea of a Union, or Federation, of British South Africa, and politics in the four colonies

became a welter of intrigue and jealousy. The main point of discussion was plainly whether the Cape or the Transvaal was to be the dominant factor in the contemplated Union, and a question of apparently greater interest, whether Cape Town or Pretoria was to be its capital. The question of unification, or federation, never really became a vital issue, once the convention, summoned for 1909, got to work. Natal, indeed, was at first almost solid for Federation, owing to its well-grounded fear of being swamped in a unified South Africa, on account of its comparative smallness. When it became evident that the Cape and the Transvaal were determined to have unification, almost the whole of industrial and commercial Natal swung round for fear of being left out of the game! My insistence that Natal would be wholly swamped by the other provinces was pooh-poohed by the Natalian intelligentsia, but has proved woefully true, and many of them have openly regretted their neglect of the warning.

The Union, which was to bring peace and unity to South Africa, came into being in 1910, yet both seem as far off as ever in 1932! Why? I have always found the South African of either race equally genial, jovial and humorous, and have constantly regretted when "politics" have forced me to don my Editorial war-paint and grasp my party or racial lance. Fortunately, politics always slink away on the return of prosperity, and this cannot well be delayed much longer!

One matter of the greatest promise is that the young people of both races seem to like and understand

each other well enough ! I have always noticed that they are equal adepts at either sport or flirtation, and the influence of these two pursuits may well be backed against that of any silly "two-stream" policy. Inter-marriage is, indeed, the true fountain-head of the "one-stream" race !

The position in 1909 was peculiar. The Cape regarded itself as the representative colony of the South African hegemony, as it was the oldest, the longest settled, the closest in touch with Europe, also presumably the most civilised and cultured. The Transvaal, paradoxically, claimed to be the wealthiest and most go-ahead of the four colonies, through the presence of the Rand goldfields and the new, or Uitlander, population of Johannesburg, and also to be the true representative of the older Boer people through its solid phalanx of burghers of the Backveld.

This was having it both ways with a vengeance, but it passed and held good. Both these principles hoped for the support of the Orange Free State as a make-weight against the other, but the Cape was so suspicious of the affinity between the two ex-Republics that it insisted inexorably on Natal being brought in. The Transvaal, the good Kapenaars held, would be less dangerous in a quartet than in a trio !

The same jealousy existed between these two over the question of the capital, and the claim of Bloemfontein as an ideal central spot was pooh-poohed altogether.

The South Africa Act went through, and was the most botched-up constitution in existence. Drawn up with every appearance of haste, the Dutch must

have chuckled in secret over the way they had pulled the wool over the eyes of these British fellows in the convention. A nominally fair quota of representation was vitiated by an advantage of 15 per cent. in favour of country voters. The Provincial Council system, an alleged concession to the Federationists, was not even entrenched, and has been already threatened. The "equal language rights" was contorted into compulsory bilingualism for the State services, and so on. The question of the capital was "solved" by making Cape Town the Legislative and Pretoria the Executive capital, a farce of infinite annual expense and trouble to this State of under 2,000,000 whites !

But the jobbery that accompanied the deal was similarly bare-faced. The Transvaal Government closed a £2,000,000 contract for "Union buildings" in Pretoria, and left the Union to pay for it. The Cape Government voted itself £1,000,000 for new railways, to be provided out of Union funds, and spent the money on relaying its old railway system. A judgeship was vacant in Natal, so the State-Attorney gave himself the job, and added a six months' leave to cover the disappearance of the Natal Legislature and the possibility of a row. Bloemfontein was made the seat of Supreme Judicial Appeal, and Maritzburg a sort of educational head centre. Favours were, in fact, distributed on the graduated scale suited to the recipients' importance, and on a scheme calculated to prevent grumbling from reaching a really obstructionist pitch. The distribution of posts and offices and State positions generally was tempered by the necessity of maintaining the four existing civil services.

A similar necessity existed for bringing the "best trained and most capable" members of the four ex-Governments into high places in the single new one. The mere fact that the Union seems to have been a little unduly rushed should therefore save even those gentlemen whose appearance on the Union's list of the exalted made one whistle, from being classed with the Irish nobleman who, on being reproached with selling his country at the time of the Union of Ireland and Great Britain, replied: "An' sure, he's the lucky man that has a country to sell in these times!"

But that the sub-continent had little reason to be proud of its statesmen-politicians who put the Union through will be seen from the following instances of interviews I had with certain leaders on the British side, and the evidence provided of the small esteem in which they held each other. As to the Dutch leaders, the above will have shown how they, like true *slimme kerls*, humbugged their British colleagues on the convention. Besides, it was an understood thing that the first Union Government was to be a "best man" one, selected from the best men of all parties. However, the Dutch denied this, and having a majority of the whole House, pushed even poor old Merriman aside, and made Louis Botha Premier. Now this was not so much deliberate *verneukerei* on the part of the Dutch members of the Convention, as simple idiocy on the side of the British, for leaving this "best-man-Government" idea as a mere suggestion, and not pressing it to formal acceptance as a definite motion. "Honours" seemed easy, but the Dutch won the rubber!

After the Convention, Dr. Jameson and Sir Thomas Smartt, as is known, toured the Union to consolidate the British opposition, and discuss the possibility of pressing for that "best-man Government" which the British had hoped for, without any apparent justification, as an outcome of the convention itself.

I was then Editor of *The Natal Advertiser*, and was asked to see these two leaders of the Unionist Party at the Marine Hotel. Dr. Jameson was kind enough to say he thoroughly recognised that I was running a pronounced Imperial and British South African policy, but that he could not understand why I stood out as an independent paper, and did not join up with the Unionists. A united front was needed. I replied that the general British South African community regarded the Unionist party as more of a magnates' league than representative of the whole British South African public, and I was seeking, as an independent paper, to represent that public, though of course I was with the Unionists in all they did on behalf of the public, as distinct from the magnates' interests.

"Besides," I said, "why ask me to join a party which Sir Lionel Phillips has only lately declared, here in Durban, to be moribund."

Asked when he had said that, I replied that Sir Lionel, speaking at a big dinner at the Durban Club, at which I had been present, had said that, as many people looked askance at the Unionist Party, because of its alleged capitalistic or magnate complexion, he could tell them that there were hopes of merging it in a larger non-racial party of British and Dutch pro-

gressives. "The Unionist party was," he said, "moribund."

Sir Thomas Smartt hastily adjured me not to pay too much attention to Sir Lionel Phillips! "He was a no-account man!"

"Well, anyway," I replied, "I was, as they acknowledged, running a straight Imperialistic British South African policy, and as an independent paper, we satisfied a section of the public which was not satisfied that the Unionist Party was not too much linked up with the capitalist. In any case, I would keep on until the Unionists were merged into that large Dutch and British Progressive party, which Sir Lionel had prophesied." This materialised later as the S.A.P. or South African Party.

As is well known, Dr. Jameson was in no way impressed by the ability of our Natal politicians, but declared them incapable of running a vestry properly, not to speak of a Town Council, far less a Government—"Always in Botha's pocket for favours for their sugar industry!" We who know them more intimately know also that Jameson sized them up fairly correctly.

On another occasion Dr. Jameson was here again, with Sir Charles Crewe, to push Unification at our Referendum, and again I was summoned to a consultation. I told them that Natal was all for Federation, but that I thought the Referendum would go as they wished owing to the extraordinary pressure being put on the public by certain leading men. The heads of firms were calling their employees together and telling them that, though they would never dream

of telling them how they should vote, they had to inform them that if the South Africa Act were rejected, the firm would have to close down within six months ! These two gentlemen politely questioned the accuracy of my statement, but in support of the truth of my allegation as to the pressure exerted by the big houses, I may mention that when the tumult and the shouting had died down, a leading Industrialist blurted out to me, " Confound you, Hallé, your opposition to Unification made me spend eleven thousand pounds ! " To which I grimly retorted that his advocacy of Unification would cost him more than £110,000 yet. Look at the position of the Union in 1932 in proof of it !

As a lesson on the foolishness of capital in its periodical fits of nervousness, it must be recorded that Lord Selborne, after leaving the Transvaal Governorship, passed through Durban and made a speech at a public meeting in the old Town Hall in which he said that, though he knew that Natal had accepted Union because she was afraid that the other three South African colonies would go into Union without her and leave her out in the cold, he could now tell them that if Natal had stood out for Federation, the other three must have given way to her or there would have been no Union. The Cape and the Transvaal were so jealous of one another, and so doubtful of the Orange Free State, that they absolutely would not have gone into Union without Natal as a dead weight and balance.

I had been convinced of this all through the Convention controversy and the Referendum agitation,

and had used it as an argument in endeavouring to persuade the Natal public to hold out for "Federation or nothing." I refused to abandon my independent policy, and told Dr. Jameson and Sir Charles Crewe that if they wanted Natal's support for their Unionist policy they were going a jolly funny way about it.

"Look," I said, "at the curious steps your emissaries take to commend your party to Durbanites ! Here has Sir Percy Fitzpatrick been down, on the same errand as you, and all he had to tell a Durban meeting in the Town Hall was that Durban was not a Natal town at all, but merely a landing-place for goods for the Rand and the interior generally. In fact, we would see presently that a tin of sardines would be sold in Pretoria for exactly the same price as in Durban ! Hardly a way to ingratiate himself or his political party with people down here !"

Dr. Jameson looked thoughtful for a moment and then exclaimed softly, "Poor Percy ! And he told us he held Natal in the hollow of his hand !" "Yes," muttered Sir Charles Crewe, "but he always was a d——d ass !"

"Well, gentlemen," I said, rising and taking my hat, "I have heard you two, and Sir Thomas Smartt, on Sir Lionel Phillips and Sir Percy Fitzpatrick. You have called one of them a 'no-account man' and the other a 'd——d ass.' I have not had an opportunity of hearing the opinion of these two about you three, but you are all five held to be leaders of the Unionist Party, and you will hardly claim that there is a unity of sentiment, and a sense of mutual confidence, among you, such as would induce an outsider to place himself

under your leadership. I prefer to remain independent at present," and I left them.

Well, South Africa had now passed a further milestone in its career, and stood out in all the glory of a full-fledged self-governing Dominion of the Empire. There was no doubt but that the Dutch of the older tradition, seeing their side in power in a united South Africa, regarded the consummation of Union as a triumph for their cause, and a promise of absolute independence in the future. It availed little that the British Government had sent a squadron of warships to Durban at the time of the Convention, nominally to give *éclat* to the occasion, but really as a quiet reminder that South Africa was, and would have to remain, dependent on the Empire, especially as concerned defence. The Dutch recalcitrants on the Convention were positively sulky at the presence of these warships and refused to visit them. One could not, however, fail to admire the patience with which the Imperial Government put up with these tantrums of her sulky colonial children, and even continued to bear over 90 per cent. of the burden of Imperial Defence without demanding that each Dominion should take its share.

One trusts that the members of the Convention responsible for the final shape of the South Africa Act were proud of their work! It had been a case of "pull devil, pull baker!" all through. The most amusing fight was that over the railways, the native labour question, and the division of traffic. Of course, the stock old Cape Railway policy was to keep Cape Town as the one all-important port and trading-station in South Africa.

In fact, Dr. Jameson had hugged the ludicrous suggestion to his bosom that the future Cape to Cairo Railway of Cecil Rhodes's dream should form the one main artery of the African railway system, and be worked from Cape Town, while all the side or branch lines, whether from the West Coast at Walfish Bay, or Benguella, or farther north ; from the South Coast, at Port Elizabeth, East London or Durban ; or from the East Coast, at Delagoa, Beira, Mozambique, or even Mombasa, should be treated as mere feeders to this main line, and therefore feeders also to Cape Town's importance.

This, of course, was a hopeless idea, in face of the jealousies of Port Elizabeth, East London, and the geographical position of Durban, but its chief antagonist was, of course, the Transvaal. First of all, Lourenço Marques was nearer the Rand than even Durban by a long chalk, and secondly, the Rand gold-mining industry very badly wanted the native labour Portuguese East Africa could supply. Natal and Durban, however, put a heavy foot down, and stated bluntly that Union was off, unless a fair division of the trade to the Rand were made and guaranteed. A *modus vivendi* was therefore come to, *nolens volens*, and proved a source of dissension for years afterwards.

The whole of these arrangements were, of course, come to as a result of forced bargains between the four colonies, each fighting bitterly for its own interests. It is difficult to see one point that was settled in the sole interest of South Africa itself.

The most ludicrous struggle of all was that over the question, " Who is to be the first Premier of the new

Dominion?" Mr. J. X. Merriman, the Premier of the Cape, had that little matter fixed in his own mind, at any rate! There could, and would, be only one possible claimant, himself, and he posed, talked and wrote as if his selection were a foregone conclusion. He had, however, a political past to handicap him, despite his acknowledged ability and his later services to his colony. Had he not been dismissed from his Ministerial position by a Governor, in the early days, and had not he and Dr. Sauer been regarded as the two clowns of the Cape political circus for many a year? And it must be confessed that they filled the rôles to a T.

General Botha lay, meanwhile, as low as Brer Rabbit, and said nuffin! Nevertheless, when it came to the counting of heads in the new Parliament, it was at once seen that his Dutch followers were so numerous that he was the only man for the job. He selected his Cabinet where he chose, and on Dr. Jameson protesting that there had been an unwritten agreement that the first Union Government was to be a "best-man Government," irrespective of party, he replied that there had been nothing definite, and that as party government was inevitable, it was as well to start it at once.

The question of a suitable Governor-General was not allowed to trouble people long. The British Government, with its peculiar flair for what would please the other side, and its usual profound indifference to the susceptibilities of its own people, appointed Lord Gladstone, the son of the statesman who had returned the Transvaal to the Dutch, after

Majuba, and thereby profoundly convinced the whole Boer race that Great Britain had been soundly thrashed. They were now convinced that Great Britain was again busy placating them ! Of all which it may be said that magnanimity is a fine rare thing, but should be kept carefully clear of any suspicion of high falutin' !

However, Lord Gladstone, admirably supported by Lady Gladstone, made a very favourable impression all round. He had been a most successful Home Secretary, and was a thoroughly trained and experienced Minister. What endeared him to the Dutch was that he, himself, was a successful farmer. A bluff, plain-spoken, but withal dignified man, he soon established himself in general favour, and his own and Lady Gladstone's tact and geniality enabled them to meet a situation that was not without its difficulties.

Lord Milner had flatly refused to remain on as Governor-General and "take orders from those to whom he had so far given them," and it was as well that he had done so ! The Dutch have never been conspicuous for tact. Did not Oom Paul bluntly tell Sir Hercules Robinson, when, as Governor of the Cape, he went up to Pretoria, to smooth over Dr. Jim's little *faux pas*, that he, Her Britannic Majesty's special Envoy, "Lied" ! causing Sir Hercules to leave the room, swearing that he could not allow Queen Victoria to be insulted, not for the sakes of all the Uitlanders on the Rand or anywhere else—the one occasion, up to date, on which J. P. Kruger had had to eat humble pie.

Well ! General Botha, excellent man as he was, possessed few of *les petits arts de la société*, and when he

wanted Lord Gladstone to be present at a Cabinet meeting, used to send for him, instead of cabbing his Cabinet up to Government House, and Lord Gladstone went !

Another little difficulty arose through a well-meant but impracticable gesture of benignity from King Edward VII himself. The King, as a special distinction to South Africa, announced that Lord and Lady Gladstone were to be treated with the full ceremony and etiquette that would be observed to himself and Queen Alexandra were they present in the Union themselves. As a consequence, it so happened that a leading Durban lady, travelling out with the new Governor-General and Vicereine, and invited—or commanded?—through a lady-in-waiting to make a fourth at bridge one evening, went up next morning to where Lady Gladstone was standing alone, and addressed some innocent remark to her, to be met by a calmly ignoring glance. On seeking explanation of the apparently inexplicable slight, from the lady-in-waiting aforesaid, it was pointed out to the aggrieved lady that no one may speak to Royalty before Royalty has opened the ball by speaking to its humble subject first ! and that the Royal ukase had decreed that the present Governor-General and Governor-Generaless were to be considered Royal for the time being. As can well be imagined, it had speedily to be humbly intimated to His Majesty that this particular ukase really would not work in so democratic a country as South Africa. It was altogether beyond the comprehension of the good ladies of Klein Pietpotgieter Wesselstroom, and kindred cities, and was taken off.

Lord Gladstone was, however, fated to come up, before long, against a new factor in the South African puzzle, which his very experience as a British Secretary for Home Affairs made it more difficult for him to grasp aright. The Labour Party was beginning to raise a questioning head. Labour was already commencing to count in Australia and New Zealand, and the Rand miners and railwaymen at the various works, in Durban, Salt River and other centres, together with the diamond diggers at Kimberley and elsewhere, the colliery men scattered about, and the various minor industries already springing up, constituted a formidable total. The miners on the Rand were no longer the quiet dependable lot of the earlier days, mostly recruited from Cornwall, North Britain and America; men making good money and saving up to go home. A far larger number, of more mixed breed, and already including a fair proportion of young Afrikanders, were now employed on the area between Boksburg and Krugersdorp; the mines were deeper, and miners' phthisis was already showing. Accidents were frequent, and quarrels between the heads of a mining industry, as yet untrammelled by much legislation, and a body of the workers, imbued with the Home and American Trade Union tradition of power, were steadily mounting. The legitimate leader and the illegitimate agitator were increasingly to the fore. The class of magnate in charge of the industry was hardly one to allow its body of shareholders to suffer from any excess of altruism on its part towards the workers, and a Dutch Government, mainly representative of the farmers

of the Union, was frankly at sea in industrial matters.

By the middle of 1913 things had come to a head on the Rand in the shape of a furious strike marked by most regrettable scenes of violence. Not only the mines, but the trams, were closed down; the newspapers and printing offices were forcibly brought to a standstill. Attacks on *The Star* offices, the mouthpiece of the Mining companies, and the Park Railway Station resulted in one native being burnt alive; and the leaders were openly threatening to cut off the town's light and water and turn loose the 200,000 mine natives, before the police were armed and the troops employed against the rioters. On Friday, July 4th, the Government having so far given no sign of life, the British community telegraphed an offer to the Premier, to raise a force in Johannesburg to assist in subduing the outbreak; and 600 men were enrolled, armed, officered and sent to various posts between Saturday midday and Monday morning; some 250 of these being actually equipped and in position by 6 p.m. on the Saturday.

When Government did bestir itself, it committed the gross blunder of allowing its two chief leaders, Generals Botha and Smuts, to be held up at the point of the revolver on the balcony of the hotel in Johannesburg to which they had come in, by some of the strike leaders. They had to make the most humiliating promises of enquiries, redress of grievances, etc., to escape from the hole they had let themselves into. The two generals acquired a knowledge of the ways of the striker, which led General Botha to declare

that never again would he allow himself to be cornered in such a fashion !

This incident, of course, precluded any course of putting down the *émeute* by force, though the military had been called out to defend the Rand Club from an attack, and, lying down across the street, had loosed a volley, and caused casualties among the advancing mob. This, of course, was exalted by the strike leaders into a charge of ruthless brutality. The promises wrung from Generals Botha and Smuts, though provisional on the assent of the Union Parliament, were vaunted as a "glorious victory" for the workers. The fact was, that the mob had no further appetite for violence after the display of force by the military at the Rand Club. The men returned to work and the trouble subsided, to break out in greater violence some four or five years after the Great War.

I was invited with my wife to lunch at Government House with Lord and Lady Gladstone, then in Durban. After lunch Lord Gladstone gave us his views on the position. He was very depressed. I asked if I might give him my view. He replied that that was what he had invited me for. I said the position in South Africa was not at all like that in England, where the working classes were so strong and numerous that a general strike might bring the whole life of the country to a standstill. Here in South Africa a general strike would only be felt in a few towns. The Parliament and Government would still be run by representatives of the farming class in all four Provinces, and would go on as before and dominate the situation. He seemed to recognise the force of this, and grew much calmer.

A most peculiar feature of the South African position was that the Labour Party should have joined forces with the Nationalist Party, the die-hard section of the South African Dutch, representative of the true old Boer. A supreme piece of irony lay in the fact that these South African Labourites refused to have anything to do with General Smuts, because he had put down the Rand strike by force.

The outlook towards the end of 1913 was not without hope. General Botha had got rid of General Hertzog by the ingenious device of resigning as Premier, accepting office again, and re-forming his Cabinet without this recalcitrant member. The moderate Dutch who stood by General Botha and formed the new "South African Party" were more numerous than the Nationalists under General Hertzog and enjoyed the general support of the British Unionists. While rejecting the Hertzog idea of keeping the two white races strictly apart, they were not yet ripe for complete Union with the British Party. On the other hand, the extent to which the extreme Dutch, or Boer section, was rotten with disloyalty was shown by the fact that it broke into open rebellion next year, on the outbreak of the Great War in Europe. The action of the dominant section of the South African Dutch, under Louis Botha, the Union Premier, was, as we shall see presently, unique in the world's history. It has led to a *rapprochement* between the Dutch and British Progressives of the Union, of the greatest promise for the future.

CHAPTER XV

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE GREAT WAR

No one could well help admiring the Germany of the later nineteenth century. She had established herself by three remarkable wars, and raised herself from the status of a weak, second-rate Power to that of a strong, first-rate one. She had then adopted the policy of protecting her industries and commerce, and training her people in arms to protect both. On these lines she had made marvellous progress. Her industries and commerce were increasing by leaps and bounds. Her army was easily the most powerful in the world, and her navy next to that of Great Britain.

Unfortunately, all this had the natural result of giving the nation a swelled head.

They had the means, sure enough, and could and would not wait till "peaceful penetration" brought the whole world tumbling into their lap like a ripe apple.

And how the Kaiser and his henchman, Bethmann-Hollweg, twisted the negotiations subsequent to the Sarajevo murder to the consummation William and the military party had aimed at for years, and proclaimed war and "Der Tag," fits in too pat with the whole "young military" movement and the teaching of its prophets for any disclaimer on the part of present-day Germany to be feasible.

As to brutality, it is not too much to say that the German soldiers—and all Germans had to be soldiers—were systematically brutalised by their non-commissioned officers. Hanging by the thumbs from a bough of a tree, with toes barely touching the ground, was a slight punishment compared to some. From brutality to bestiality is but a step, and I was told by a German manager of a store in the eastern Transvaal that, when serving his time in the Army, his regiment was stationed at Potsdam, and he and ten of his fellow privates had rather an adventure one evening! Strolling in the Royal Park, they saw a pretty young governess in the distance, evidently returning home after her day's work. They at once gave chase, overtook and overpowered her, and all eleven raped her. He thought it rather fine, and was quite surprised when I decidedly disagreed with him!

What with exaggeration of successes and ignoring of reverses, the only real guide to the fortunes of the War, was the changing position of the rival forces on the map.

Another point that impressed me was the impossibility of pointing the finger at any one man and saying, "He won the war!"

But of all the notable warriors for whom the Great War was distinguished, South Africa may look with special pride on General Louis Botha. Far from saying, with several of his fellow Boer Leaders, that "England's difficulty was South Africa's opportunity," and heading his people into rebellion, he declared at the outbreak of the War, that "he had never known a country prosper by breaking its oath," and he intended

to be true to the word he had given at Vereeniging, at the close of the Boer War, and to be faithful to the allegiance he had sworn ! The manner in which he assumed responsibility for the safety of South Africa—thereby allowing the British garrison to be withdrawn for service in Europe—suppressed the rebellion in the Northern Provinces, and subdued and took German South-West Africa, won him the name of the foremost oversea Imperialist, and he will always be known as the noblest figure in South African history.

Fired by the examples of General Botha and General Smuts in West and East Africa, a really considerable number of South Africans of Dutch descent volunteered for service.

It is well known that Botha wished to do far more to bring the Dutch and British together, later, than the backward of his followers would allow.

In any case, the Great War cemented a brotherhood between the two South African white races in blood that has made the dream of a South African Republic impossible.

During the War, finding myself, at a special luncheon aboard a Union Castle liner, next the Chief Engineer, I questioned him, as a seafaring man from home, as to why Germany was in direful straits for the necessaries of life : “ Surely the Germans could draw large supplies from Holland and the three Scandinavian countries, in spite of the blockade of her own ports ? ” I suggested. “ Oh yes ! ” he said with a grin, “ and they did that at first ; till our people tumbled to it, that these four beauties were importing ten times their usual stuffs and passing it on to the

Germans. Now they may only get in the average of three years before the War!" "Even then, they could spare a lot, at a price?" I queried. "Ay," said the canny Scot, with a twinkle, "when they get the chance! Mon, you should see the crush of ships at the Nore! A forest of funnels and masts! If ye asked a skipper when he looked to be awa' he'd as lief as not toe ye into the watter! Ye see, every neutral ship has to be taken by our guard ships in the Channel and North Sea to the Nore, to have its papers overhauled and be searched for contraband. I will na say our clerks are told to 'ca' canny,' but the staff are short-handed and dinna see why they should fash themselves over a bit body of a Neutral."

The aftermath of the Great War has been very similar to that of the Napoleonic wars, only, to use an Irishism, more so! There was, a century ago, no plutocratic United States to supply belligerents with war material, instead of taking her due share in the struggle against the would-be world conqueror, and then to send in a stupendous bill for it!

Otherwise there has been the same difficulty in returning to normal trade and industry—the same, only worse, unemployment, and it looks as if it will once more be Great Britain that will ease the situation.

There has, moreover, been the same overthrow of the wealth and influence of the landed classes of Great Britain, if by less ferocious means than those of the French Revolution.

CHAPTER XVI

MUSICAL AND THEATRICAL CELEBRITIES ON THE RAND

I HAD been fairly busy during all these years in Durban. Besides my activities in the Indian and native questions, my labours in the cause of Federation at the time of the Convention had materially helped to gain for Natal such concessions as the Provincial Council system, the *modus vivendi*, etc., and won me the exceptional honour of being carried shoulder high by a cheering crowd from the last great public meeting in the Town Hall. I only mention this as proof that the general public of Durban, in fact of Natal, favoured Federation, though intimidated by the industrial and commercial bigwigs from voting for it. The present wholesale *volte face* of these bigwigs is grimly amusing !

The second and more serious Labour trouble on the Rand after the War had its repercussions in Natal, though they eventuated in nothing serious.

I took a hand in squashing a couple of tram-strikes about this time which dislocated the whole life of the town. A hurried public meeting resulted in the formation of a Citizens' League with myself as chairman, and the organisation of a voluntary, private motor-car service, running the tram routes. The first strike collapsed, and the Mayor, in thanking me as head of the League, said we had saved the town £20,000. A second strike went the same way. The incident

was a repetition, in little, of the abortive general strike in England. General Smuts, as is known, made short, if grim, work of the Rand rising. Communism does not seem to thrive in this sub-continent !

If the Labour leaders and agitators failed to achieve much by violence, they were for a time more successful constitutionally. They returned a fairly strong party to the Union Parliament at the election following this strike. Colonel Blaney, Natal organiser of the South African Party, was at one with me on the need for counter-organisation, and we spoke to Sir C. G. Smith, as the leading politician of the town, urging a strong anti-labour propaganda by Press, pamphlet and public meeting. I told them that had the general strike succeeded on the Rand and in Durban a large percentage of the leading men in Johannesburg would have been put against a wall and shot, and a similar list existed in Durban to be sent west the same way. "Your name, Sir Charles, heads the lot !" I remarked. "Eh ?" he exclaimed, "I wouldn't have liked that at all !"

However, nothing was done, and the Smuts Government was turned out within twenty-five months, Labour winning a record number of seats.

To turn to theatrical and musical matters ; besides Sir Charles and Lady Hallé, several musicians passed through the Rand in my time : Madame Albani, who acted marvellously in *La Traviata* ; Ben Davies, whose life I probably saved in Johannesburg by taking him by the shoulders and thrusting him inside, on finding him taking a breath of fresh air outside the heated concert-room with the temperature in the open

umpteen degrees below zero, at that altitude of over 5,000 feet above sea-level; poor old Sims Reeves, who was humorously pathetic when I walked into his sitting-room, on his passing through the Rand in the 'nineties. "Hallo, Gus!" he exclaimed at once, though it was twenty years since I had seen him; "I hope you don't mean to come and hear me squeak to-night?" "Of course I do," I said indignantly. "Then don't," he insisted; "you're old enough to have heard me when I *could* sing." "I remember how you sang 'Waft her Angels' after your row with Manchester," I replied. "Good lad!" he exclaimed with a suspicion of a break in his voice, "you remember that, do you? Well, I sang better that night than I ever did; or anyone else for that matter. Keep that memory of me, my boy, and do not spoil it by coming now that I am old and broken! Don't do it! I really ask you not to!" So I didn't. "Of course," he had added, "so long as there are d——d fools about ready to pay a guinea to hear me squawk, I shall keep on obliging them." I believe he did well in the town.

Of actors I was pleased to meet, the most amusing was Marius, who talked of his intimacy with Florence St. John. I pleased him greatly by telling him how my father had once come back from Edinburgh full of enthusiasm for a charming young actress he had heard in some comic opera, on one of his off nights. "A perfect little artiste, both as singer and actress!" It was Florence St. John, before she was known to London.

Marius was full of respectful admiration for the fat

jollity of the real old Boer woman. He had helped a squad of porters to extricate one of them from the corridor of a mail train from Cape Town, in which she had got herself hopelessly jammed. "She simply screamed with laughter, and poured out a stream of comic sounds, which he was told was Dutch, till she came out with a plop and sat down on one of her living corkscrews." He told me too how he had accidentally come on one of his best gags. He was taking the part of Marshal Saxe, in *Madame Favart*, with of course the great Florence as Madame, and in taking off his riding boots, on the stage, saw to his horror that one of his check socks was badly torn. "What you call a potato, eh?" Well, people began to laugh, and he had to do funny business, turn the foot about, swear, shout for help, and so on, "and the people they laugh more and more and clap like h——l, when I hobble off into the manager's arms! And he laugh, too, and he say, 'Marius, that a d——d funny stunt. You do him every night!' and I do!"

An actor of the genuine old tradition was the elder Holloway. One could not help admiring the dignity and restrained passion of his King Lear, and Hamlet, and the excellence of his elocution, and I had a pleasing revival of the feelings of my younger days when I watched Phelps in *The Mountebank*, Fechter in the *Master of Ravenswood*—a fine performance, despite his "Lucee! Lucee! She is mi-ine! She is mi-i-ine!"—Irving and Barry Sullivan, Rossi and the German Saxe-Meiningen Company, not forgetting Charles Calvert. With all the various shortcomings of these

older lights, one saw more acting and heard better elocution in five minutes than in five weeks of the present sex drama.

I managed to offend old Holloway bitterly, however. He had put *The School for Scandal* on, and played Charles Surface. All his art could not conceal a certain rotundity of stomach. I had ventured to remark in my notice that this experienced actor would have improved an admirable performance had he "made up" his Charles ten years younger.

This brought the old boy round to my editorial sanctum next morning, nominally for a friendly chat, and he kept me for an hour with a stream of reminiscences. The chat turned at last on Sir Charles Wyndham, for whose talent he was full of admiration. He rose at last with a sigh, and murmuring, "Ah, well! No one ever said of Charles Wyndham that he made up 'Charles Surface' ten years too old!" and left me pondering his elaborately prepared Parthian shot!

A fine actress who visited Johannesburg in these early days was Miss Fortescue, the lady who extracted the record damages for breach of promise, £10,000, from Lord Cairns. Miss Fortescue told me of an experience she had once had in Johannesburg. An apparently well-bred young fellow had introduced himself, and spun a well-connected yarn of mutual acquaintances at home. Riding was mentioned, and, on Miss Fortescue declaring a passion for it, the new swain brought an admirable brace of gee-gees round to her hotel almost daily, with a brand new lady's saddle on the better of them, and they rode here, there

and everywhere in the mornings, winding up with champagne lunches at his hotel.

This lasted till two days before she had to leave, when, instead of this young gallant, the owner of a livery stable appeared and asked if she knew where Mr. Blank was to be found. As he had made no secret about his riding out with Miss Fortescue, and it was known that she was about to leave, the livery stable man had come round to say that when the bill for horse hire, new saddle etc.—and a pretty heavy bill too—had been sent to the hotel given as an address, it was found that the bird had flown for regions unknown, leaving his hotel bill also unsettled. Miss Fortescue, to my astonishment, said she had paid up ; she had enjoyed the rides, but found them a trifle expensive !

Charles Arnold made an expensive joke just before the Boer War. He had been playing in Johannesburg to good houses, and his last night occurred when war was practically certain. He actually had the audacity to sing a verse ending “Paul Kruger will take off his hat to the Queen,” with the newly appointed Commandant of Johannesburg looking at him from a stage box. Arnold left next day for Pretoria, with his company and paraphernalia, only to be packed summarily, with his whole bag of tricks, into a train and sent down to Cape Town, one of the last consignments to cross the border.

One of the greatest artistes I had the pleasure of meeting during this period was Paderewski. His experience of Durban was, however, not quite happy. Whether because his great fame as a pianist had not

penetrated to this out-of-the-way spot, or that even its careful, if wealthy, intelligentsia were alarmed at the guinea charge for stalls, it is painful to relate that there were not 400 people in the Town Hall when his first concert took place. When I went round to the artistes' room in the interval, and said I had come to apologise for the town, the Maestro, his eyes ablaze, cut me short: "A town, you call it?" he snapped out. "I have never been so insulted in the smallest village in Europe. I play here no more! I break all my engagements! I leave by the first boat!" and he did! My explanation that the people of this alleged centre of culture would not pay more than 5s. a seat to hear the Archangel Gabriel toot his horn, only made things worse.

Unfortunately, some silly young jackanapes on board the liner by which he left completed the ruin of Durban's reputation as far as he was concerned. Some of the passengers were playing poker in the saloon one day, when Paderewski strolled in, sat down at the piano and began to play quietly. For an imbecile joke, one of the players got up, went to the instrument, and asked the famous pianist if he would mind leaving off, "It interfered with their game!" When Paderewski, one of the most hysterically sensitive of men, rose in a fury, the youngster rubbed things in by leaning confidentially over the piano and saying, "And it isn't as if you could play the d——d thing, you know!" A perverted kind of humour, and not to be taken as representative.

Madame Careno met with a very different reception, though possibly her fame was even more imperfectly

known here. Her shrewd little agent, Benno Scherek, himself an artiste to the finger-tips, had not raised the price of the seats by more than a half, which may have had something to do with it. In any case, Durban was hardly roused to the enthusiasm of Vienna, where, as she told me laughingly, the whole body of students would serenade her at her hotel, and then fight each other in the street for a flower or handkerchief. She was a consummate artiste.

The vocalist who really scored a triumph was, of course, Clara Butt, who came in glorious voice. I learnt to know a curious trait in her character. Her programmes were mostly of the popular type. The first song she sang here, however, was that powerfully grim and morose air: "Divinité du Styx," and when I called once at her hotel, I surprised her trying over an aria of the same genre. On mentioning to her agent my surprise at this strain in her character, he told me there was no doubt she did take a weird delight in this almost savage range of music, quite opposed to her usual public selections.

An interesting appearance on the Durban concert platform was that of the Cavaliere Coscia, a cousin of Caruso, and the possessor of a magnificent voice of the true Italian *tenore* variety. The effect, however, was somewhat spoiled by an over-insistence on the high notes, that reduced his songs to fine vocal efforts difficult to tell "t'other from which." He would reply to expostulation, with a good-humoured, "Bah! My public, it like my very big notes. It can hear tunes every day!"

He told me an amusing story of his war experience.

The regiment in which he was a corporal was sent to a town in northern Italy, large enough to boast an opera-house. The proprietor heard of Coscia's presence in camp and came to him with a piteous story of empty houses and approaching ruin. "Now everything would be all right! Coscia must come and sing!" "I tell him," said Coscia, "it is not possible. I am no more Coscia, the famous *tenore*, but Coscia, the stupid Corporal. However, he cry so bad that I say, 'All right, I ask my Lieutenant.'

"Well, I ask my Lieutenant, and he—what you English say—d——n my eyes! Dat hurt, and I send word to my friend I come and sing next day for him, but not as Cavaliere Coscia, No! as 'M. Quelque Chose,' famous singer from Paris! All right! Next day, I tell my brother Corporal to say to that chien of a Lieutenant, if he poke about, 'Oh, Coscia, he there, he everywhere!' and I go off.

"The house is full that night to hear that 'great Frenchman,' and I, when I go singing on the stage, I see my Colonel and his two Majors in the middle of the stalls, front row! I say to myself, 'Now, Coscia, to-morrow you hang! To-night you sing your best!' I do, and in the interval my Colonel and his Majors come behind, shake me by the hand, and they say, 'M. Quelque Chose, you sing very fine!'

"Well, I say 'all right now!' And I take my friend of the Opera to the best hotel, give him supper and much wine, and I sleep dere, have breakfast and stroll to camp. There, that d——d Lieutenant see me, arrest me and have me taken to the Colonel his tent.

The Colonel, he say, 'Corporal Coscia, absent without leave; three days—what you call C.B.' Me, I say: 'But, my Colonel, last night you shake my hand and say I sing very fine!' 'Yes,' say my Colonel, 'last night you very fine singer; to-day you very bad soldier! Take him away!'"

Towards the end of my time in Durban, owing no doubt to the spread of the gramophone, the wireless and the "Talkie," to say nothing of the jazz craze, it came about that even first-grade artistes failed to cover their expenses, and warned their confrères against projected South African tours. Indeed, the position out here is frankly a strange one. The musical taste of South Africa has improved vastly during the past quarter of a century, despite the distraction of the Great War and its aftermath of confusion and depression. The two excellent Municipal Orchestras at Cape Town and Durban have contributed greatly to this end. Yet the general public has gone jazz mad.

Still, the Eisteddfodau at Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, together with the many minor ones that have sprung up lately, have attracted competitors numbered in the aggregate by their tens of thousands annually, and the outlook is distinctly good.

A work which I venture to claim as a labour in the promotion of music has been my twenty years' presidentship of the Natal Eisteddfodau. Starting in 1909, we held our first Musical Festival in 1910 with barely a hundred competitors. The venture grew, till in 1928 we numbered over 2,000 entrants.

The number of young musicians of South African

birth who have made names for themselves out here, and even in Europe, is gratifyingly large.

In matters theatrical we were certainly well served. In looking back at a list of Shakespearian exponents I remember being much struck by the advantage fine physique and height give a company, and I was much amused at being told by the younger Holloway that few people realised that a company's engagement was largely governed by the actor-manager's own inches. Matheson Lang was 6 feet 2 inches, and therefore favoured men of two yards. Holloway himself had lost a favourable engagement in America, owing to an eleventh-hour cablegram asking his height. When he replied, "6 feet" a final cable said, "Nothing doing—limit 5 feet 9 inches."

I was on the *Mercury* when the great dispute over the Union Flag came on. I ventured to submit, through its columns, a humorous though rather sarcastic design. The absurd pretensions of the Backveld Boer and their alleged leaders, that they were destined by the Almighty to be a great and independent nation, and had as a matter of fact lately become so, has always struck me as pitifully humorous. The very existence of the South African hegemony is as a unit in the British Empire, or "Commonwealth" as Great Britain and the greater Dominions have agreed to call it, but even these, important as has been the aid they have given to the Mother Country in times of need, know perfectly well that the safety of the Commonwealth depends practically on the strength of Great Britain's army and navy.

There seemed therefore no more appropriate flag

for a Nationalist or Boer Party, than a flat brown surface typifying the veld, with the typical South African bird, the ostrich, standing on it, with its head buried in the sand, in its traditional attitude. The motto being John Brand's apocryphal saying : " Alles zal regt kom ! "

CHAPTER XVII

LATER DAYS

My wife, Hannah, was both lovely and spirituelle. Daughter of a merchant of Ashton-under-Lyne, I met her in Johannesburg in the early 'nineties, when on a visit to two sisters and a brother already established there. Our courtship and married life were singularly happy. My activities as an Editor, chairman of societies, etc., entailed numerous public appearances in Durban, where my wife was for twenty years a notable figure. She was dubbed "Queen Alexandra," and at one Eisteddfod the vice-Royalties, as usual, presiding over a gala crowd of 3,000, she looked so dainty, seated by them, one blaze of flame-coloured georgette, piled-up dark hair, gleaming crown and huge bouquet, that, when she bade adieu to Lady Gladstone, with whom she was a prime favourite, old A. E. Greene, Durban's M.P.C., exclaimed: "Durban is proud of you to-night, Mrs. Hallé. The town could not have had a finer or lovelier representative!"

A fact that lends a certain amount of interest to the record of my activities between the years 1916-31 is that I had an attack of cataract in one eye after the other, which made a couple of operations necessary, and left me more or less blind for close on two years. In fact, I ran my weekly paper for a full year without

being able to read a line of a book or paper or a word of the copy I wrote for my own rag. My dear wife, with admirable devotedness, used to read the necessary books and papers to me in the evening while I sat and watched the electric light grow dimmer day by day. My staff and comps. put up with me with marvellous patience, and I am glad to say that I maintained a grim cheeriness, firstly, for my wife's sake—our only son was fighting in France—and secondly, to lighten matters for my staff and friends. This led to comical scenes sometimes. I presided at a lecture given by Maurice Evans; he was going stone blind himself, and when he arrived and we tried to shake hands, we stood pawing the air till Mayor Nicholson came up, with a genial laugh and said, "You are two beauties to light us on our way!" and led us on to the platform. Nevertheless, I recovered sufficiently to run the Citizens' League to success. I ran the *Eisteddfodau* all through, and was able to do good work on the *Mercury* later till I resigned on reaching the age of eighty after the death of my dear wife. Unhappily, a growth in her back, an operation for which was made impossible by two accidents at intervals, both in the right arm, compelled her withdrawal to privacy, and after some three or four years of great suffering ended in her death on April 9th, 1931.

Before I close I would like to present an outline of what my life has led me to believe: I believe, with Sir James Jeans, that the Universe is a "Great Thought" or dream in a Mind in which the atoms out of which the Universe, including our own minds, has grown,

exist as thought. This Great Mind must be as the least consideration will show, Eternal, Omnipotent, Infinite and Omniscient, and this "Great Thought" a vision of the working out of the infinite potentialities of the attributes of this Almighty Eternal Spirit, moved by that divine urge or necessity for self-revelation of which the "divine afflatus" of our prophets and poets is a faint reflex. I would contend again that it stands to reason that creation, be it of one or many Universes and of seen and unseen worlds, must be the revelation of the infinite potentialities of an Infinite Eternal Omnipotent Spirit. And the one crowning proof of the height and the depth and the breadth, the Universality of this Great Mind is that one finds the faint germs of a moral order implanted in most uncouth and barbarous races; even the ancient ruins of America show there has never been a civilisation without its religion. A quotation that has always struck me as remarkable as coming from a pagan source, from Plato's *Theatetus*, is: "We must endeavour to fly from this world to the other as soon as we can. Now that flight means the becoming like to God as much as possible, and the way to be like God is to become just and holy and wise. . . . God is in no way and in no degree unjust, but just in the highest extreme, and nothing is more like to Him than one of us who, in his own sphere, shall become as wise as possible."

There are countless messages constantly breaking through the walls of our flesh to our inner consciousness, telling us of the unseen glories that surround us. The natural law that guides the stars in their courses

through space, and the electrons in their dance round the protons in the atom ; that forms the rainbow in the sky, and on the foam of the waves on the shore, speaks infallibly of the existence of Omnipotence and universal law and order. Do life and beauty, intelligence, the sense of guilt and innocence speak of no mysteries of the unseen ?

And now as to South Africa and its future : fully recognising the great strides it has made in the past thirty years towards the full *rapprochement* of the two white races, and the building-up of the true bi-racial people of the future, one is unable to grasp the mentality of those Nationalist leaders who are still striving to keep the two branches of the people apart, in the inane and insane effort to achieve political and economic independence. Quite apart from any question of loyalty to oaths of allegiance is it utterly impossible for them to realise that South Africa is a free and equal partner in the British Commonwealth of nations, and that there is nothing to prevent her becoming the Dominant partner, *if she can progress sufficiently* ? Do they expect her to progress at all while they are hampering immigration, driving capital out of the country, restricting enterprise, strangling commerce and industry, and generally stifling the energies of the more enlightened half of the people, on the one hand, and, on the other, gradually reducing their own section of that people to the condition of poor whites ?

The country is one of unlimited resources, and yet they deliberately check development. That the population is inherently sound is proved by the fact

that, though numerically the smallest Dominion in the Commonwealth, its youth, of both sexes, fairly holds its own in sport, against that of the mother country and the other and larger Dominions. How long, however, is this likely to continue, when, paradoxically enough, the Defence Force returns show that the general mass of the people is in the C₃ class? The leaven of the strong and able is being lost in the growing bulk of "poor whiteism."

Having played my little part industrially, politically and culturally in this sub-continent for fifty years, I have now, having enough to live on independently, and having lost my dear wife, resigned from active work, to busy myself in setting down the lessons of a long and varied life. I am living as "paying guest" with my son, who has senior charge of a long section of the Natal railway electrification. He did his bit in the War. He has married the niece of a leading Natal judge, and they have two charming and healthy little boys of two and four. There are thousands and thousands of children of similar promise here in South Africa alone, and it makes one grieve to think how our would be Nationalist rulers are trifling with the heritage of these youngsters, and what is still more ominous, trifling also with the gathering menace of native discontent. God be thanked that our own progressive bi-racial leaders are now aroused and alarmed at the perils of the situation, enlightened by experience to avoid previous blunders, and prepared for a national effort to save South Africa, as the British people are saving the Mother Country and showing the Empire how to save itself.

The British Empire is entering on a new phase as a great and vigorous Commonwealth of Nations, and in the League of Nations we have the peoples of the whole earth coming together more and more to substitute the pressure of sweet reasonableness for the brutal argument of war.

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